the weekly
Standard
MAY 22, 2006
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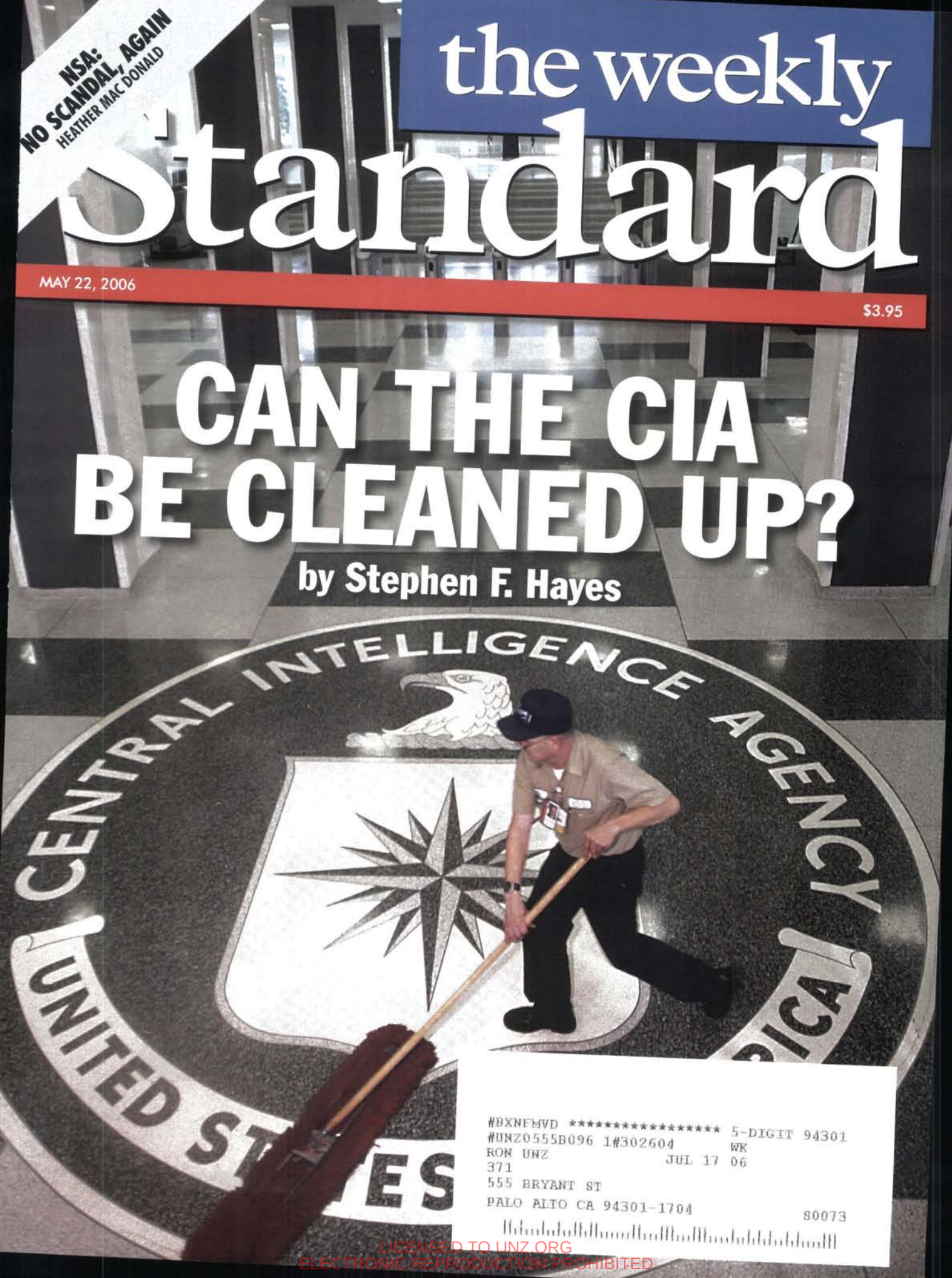
NSA: NO SCANDAL, AGAIN
HEATHER MAC DONALD

CAN THE CIA BE CLEANED UP?

by Stephen F. Hayes



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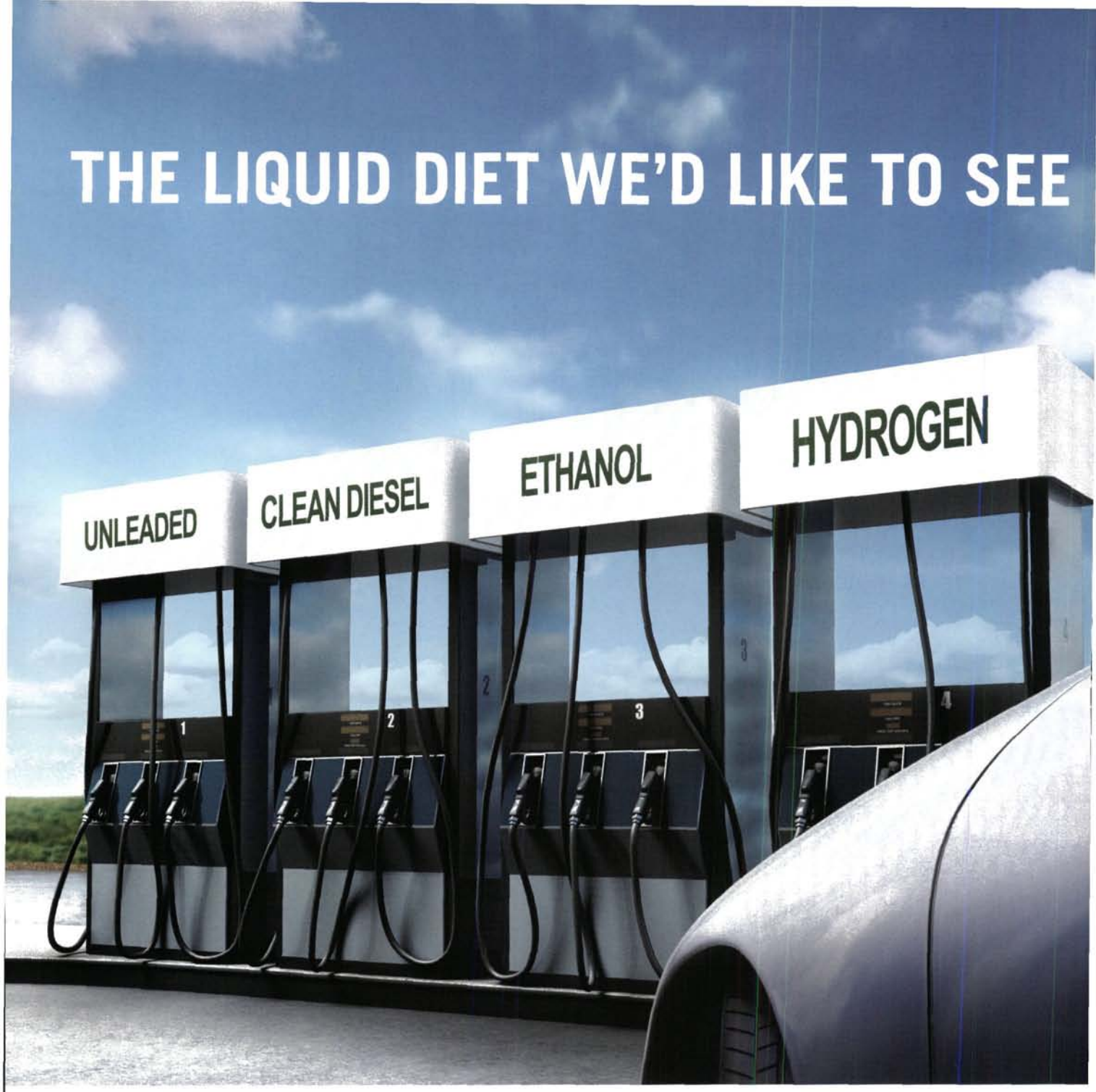

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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2006, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

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Ahmadinejad "Is Making Sense"?

Like many observers, THE SCRAPBOOK read with rapt attention the letter sent by Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to President George W. Bush. Amir Taheri reports that in Tehran, "the Persian text of the letter has become a favorite topic at dinner table conversations and is often the source of much mirth because of its flowery style, its numerous spelling and grammatical errors and, above all, the insight it offers into the mind of a man who clearly sees himself as an agent of the Hidden Imam in hastening the end of the 'Infidel' domination of the world."

The reaction in THE SCRAPBOOK's circle in Washington was much the same, although before seeing Taheri's commentary, we had to wonder if something had been lost in translation. One thing that comes through loud and clear is Ahmadinejad's ongoing obsession with Israel, the Holocaust, and the Jews. He writes to Bush:

> Students are saying that sixty years ago such a country [as Israel] did not exist. They show old documents and globes and say try as we have, we have not been able to find a country named Israel.
>
> I tell them to study the history of WWI and II. One of my students told me that during WWII, which more than tens of millions of people perished in, news about the war, was quickly disseminated by the warring parties. Each touted their victories and the most recent battlefront defeat of the other party. After the war, they claimed that six million Jews had been killed. Six million people that were surely related to at least two million families. . . .

Et cetera, et cetera, et—at great and whacky length—cetera.

What we found more surprising than the Iranian president's letter, though, was the enthusiastic reception it received over at the website of the *American Prospect*, which bills itself as "an authoritative magazine of liberal ideas." Don't liberals dislike authority? Well, we don't pretend to understand modern liberal ideas.

For instance, here is how one *Prospect* writer, a fellow named Matthew Yglesias, reacted to the letter:

> MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD IS MAKING SENSE. It's probably contrary to interest to point this out, but I think Iran's president is making a lot of sense in at least this portion of his letter: 'If billions of dollars spent on security, military campaigns and troop movement were instead spent on issues including health and aid to the poor,' he wrote, 'would there have been an ever increasing global hatred of the American governments?' This is curiously similar to my *TAP Online* column from last week. At any rate, say what you will about Ahmadinejad's anti-Semitism and the whole dictatoring business, he's still right about this.

Well, that's the authoritatively liberal take. For our part, we can't imagine that our reaction—upon finding ourselves in even a tiny bit of agreement with a fanatic like Ahmadinejad—would be to swell with pride at the coincidence. Guess that's just one more reason we'll never call ourselves a liberal. ♦

Ethics Expert

Last November, Michael Scanlon, once press secretary for soon-to-be-ex-Rep. Tom DeLay, pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to bribe public officials and, along with his partner-in-crime Jack Abramoff, defrauding several Indian tribes operating casinos of tens of millions of dollars. Ever since, Scanlon has spent most of his time cooperating with Justice Department prosecutors.

Turns out, that's not all he's been doing. According to *Roll Call*'s Mary Ann Akers, Scanlon was recently spotted in a classroom on Johns Hopkins's Washington campus. Scanlon finished his classwork for a master's degree in government some six years ago but never got around to defending his thesis. Now, he's finally found the time. In early May, according to Akers, Scanlon presented the paper to a classroom filled with professors and fellow grad students. The topic? Congressional ethics.

No one can doubt his expertise on the subject. Scanlon should receive his degree right around the time he receives his prison sentence. ♦

New Home for Uighurs

The resettlement in Albania of five Uighur men who had been detained in Guantanamo long after being found to pose no security threat to Americans ends a legal battle over the men's incarceration. Last August, Ellen Bork wrote in these pages about the plight of these men, Turkic Muslims from China's far west, who fear persecution should they ever again fall under the rule of Beijing.

U.S. authorities acted shortly before a new hearing on two of the men was to be held in federal court in Washington. An asylum request by a third was preempted by the transfers to Albania. Lawyers for two of the men were informed of the transfer only after it had taken place and have gone to Albania to investigate the conditions they face there.

The choice of Albania appears to have been a fall-back. Germany and Turkey, both of which have Uighur communities, refused Washington's entreaties. In some respects, Albania is an understandable choice. Formerly part of the Ottoman

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empire, it is 70 percent Muslim, and ethnically, the Uighurs should fit in passably well. Language, however, will be a problem, especially as there is no local Uighur community. The men would have had better prospects in this country, where other Uighur exiles had pledged to support them and help integrate them into American society.

The U.S. embassy spokesman in Tirana said that the men had requested to be settled in a European country. In fact, they hoped to be placed in a powerful country, capable of resisting pressure for their return from Beijing, which considers them political criminals. Beijing is already putting pressure on Albania to turn over the men. Will the Albanians be strong enough to resist?

Meanwhile, several more Uighurs who have been determined to be no threat reportedly remain at Guantanamo. For political reasons the Bush administration does not want to settle them here. It's a lamentably small-hearted decision. ♦

Congratulations

The Scrapbook's good friend and colleague, Weekly Standard contributing editor John Podhoretz, has just published an important book that belongs on every conservative's desk: *Can She Be Stopped? Hillary Clinton will be the next president of the United States unless*. . . . We hear an echo of our favorite political novel—Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?*—in the title (although, of Trollope's great female leads, the one Hillary reminds us of most is not Alice Vavasor but Lizzie Eustace). And the answer, in both cases, is *yes*. But you'll have to read the book to find out how to stop Hillary. We predict you'll finish it not just girded for combat but surpassingly well entertained. While there will only ever be one Trollope, Podhoretz brings great good humor, uncommon wit, and a novelist's flair to his task. ♦

A.M. Rosenthal, 1922-2006

At a time when the future of newspapers is the subject of serious debate, it is especially pertinent to note the death of the greatest newspaper editor of his generation, A.M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times*. Abe Rosenthal was 84 when he died last week, and had ceased being editor of the *Times* nearly 20 years ago. But somehow, the Rosenthal era in daily journalism seems far more distant from the present day. Though Rosenthal was not an easy man to know or work for, he had the quality all great editors possess: a vision of what a distinguished journal should be, and the energy, intellect, talent, and ruthlessness to bring it to life.

As a columnist, he had a capacity for outrage—against terrorism, tyranny, and religious persecution—matched by the passion and bravery of his words. In awarding him the Medal of Freedom four years ago, President Bush declared that Rosenthal's "outspoken defense of persecuted Christians in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East has truly made him his brother's keeper." But his legacy lives in his tenure as an editor. The *Times*, under Rosenthal, was a reader's, not a writer's, newspaper. He was less interested in the goodwill of his staff, or the good opinion of other journalists, than in serving the people who bought the *New York Times* every day to learn about the world. Whatever troubles the *Times* has since endured may be traced to its betrayal of Rosenthal's standards. ♦

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Casual

Perchance to Dream

At lunch the other day, someone asked me what I thought about *The Charlie Rose Show*. I answered that I didn't think anything about it, because by the time it comes on in Chicago I'm usually waking up for the first time. I appear to be entering the stage in life where sleep is topic number one for me and my contemporaries. "Getting much," the rude phrase from my youth, has come to take on a whole new meaning—"much" nowadays referring to sleep, sound, solid, restful sleep.

"How did you sleep?" I recall once asking a friend when we were fellow houseguests. "Splendidly," he said. "I didn't make a single error." I must be making lots of them, for I seem to sleep well perhaps one night out of seven; and splendid means getting up only once or twice without any goofy dreams disturbing my sleep.

Lots of articles on sleep deprivation, insomnia, and other bedtime maladies are popping up in the press, which suggests that sleep problems may be fairly widespread. The *New York Times*'s health writer, Calamity (as she's known) Jane Brody has recently written two such articles. Television stories about the troublesome side effects of sleeping pills—Ambien and others—are getting lots of play, though no one has yet written the advertising line about sleeping pills to match the gem turned out by the genius copywriter for Cialis, the sex stimulant pill. Perhaps it might be: If sleep persists for more than eight hours, be sure to see a physician.

I try to be in bed by 10:30 P.M. and up not later than 5:30 A.M. (Einstein said that the people who get things done in the world all get up around five in the morning.) That makes me, on good nights, a seven-hour-a-night man. Yet fewer and fewer are the nights when I get those seven hours uninterrupted. Part of this is physiological, having to do with aging bladders, a subject upon which I prefer not to dwell. But part of it is mental.

I don't usually have a tough time getting to sleep. I've found that cello music, played *adagio*, provides an excellent inducement to sleep. A few years ago I acquired an excellent CD called *Lullaby, Sweet Dreams for Children of All Ages*, in which the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, accompanied by various pianists, plays Brahms and other lullabies with such sweet soporific titles as "Gentle Dreams," "Shepherd's Lullaby," and "Slumber Song."

Even better than the cello for sleep is listening to a radio broadcast, at low volume, of Chicago Cubs games played on the West Coast. No one, in bed in a dark room, could hope to make it beyond half an inning listening to the assemblage of platitudes and commonplaces of the Cubs' two serenely dull radio announcers. Fortunately, I was clever enough to put in my nuptial agreement that I be permitted to listen to West Coast games in bed for the rest of my life.

I read before falling asleep. I'm selective here: Nothing dark or tricky is permitted bedside; my current fare is Tolstoy's *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*. The dopey cliché about "curling up in bed with a good book" has never applied to me. I can't read in bed for more than half an hour. Nor, when I wake in the middle of the night, do I ever return to my book.

No, once awakened, I try my best to lull myself back to sleep. Often I revert to scenes of my boyhood to do the job. I imagine myself playing tennis at Indian Boundary Park with my friend Bob Swenson, and all my serves go in. I picture a charming Yorkshire terrier named Max romping along the beach. I attempt to disengage my mind, let it wander where it will, and call it back only when it threatens to go into the troublesome territory of night fears or anxiety.

A chief worry one encounters on sleepless nights is that one's lack of sleep will ruin the next day. Suddenly one can't sleep because one is nervous about not sleeping. A good way to combat this, though I'm not always able to achieve it, is to attempt actually to enjoy one's insomniacal nights. On occasion, at 2:37 or 3:18 A.M. (thank you, digital clock), I can calmly sort out quotidian complications, seek solutions for problems in things I'm writing, or instead just lie there counting not sheep but my blessings.

My night life, it occurs to me, may now be more interesting than the life I live during the day. Certainly it is more unpredictable. As I turn off my bed lamp, I never know how long I shall be able to sleep without interruption. My dreams, meanwhile, get wilder and wilder. Last night I was playing a deep leftfield in a night softball game on an unlit field. The night before the dead wife of a much older and now also dead friend turned up and flirted with me. Last week I lost my then-aged father at Heathrow.

Give me, I don't say, a break, but just a little more sleep would be nice.

Joseph Epstein

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Correspondence

Wang Sounds the Gong

Most of the coverage of Wang Wenyi's protest at the White House during the welcome ceremony for Hu Jintao has ignored the reason for what she did. Ethan Gutmann's "Why Wang Wenyi Was Shouting" (May 8) helps provide an important corrective to this general trend.

There is a view of China abroad today according to which its massive and systematic human rights abuses are somehow a holdover from a rapidly receding past. The organ-harvesting from living human beings puts the lie to this comfortable delusion and challenges everyone to take a close look at the reality of the rule of the Chinese Communist party today.

Gutmann describes the *Epoch Times* as a "Falun Gong-associated publication." This needs to be clarified: The *Epoch Times* was founded by a group of Falun Gong practitioners who realized the Western media were doing a poor job of reporting on China in general and on the persecution of Falun Gong in particular. But although the individuals who founded the paper were connected to Falun Gong, many who write for the paper, which is not owned by Falun Gong, are not members.

Stephen Gregory
Epoch Times
Chicago, Ill.

Cons on the Beagle?

In his review of Larry Arnhart's *Darwinian Conservatism*, James Seaton seems to be confused about the nature of conservatism ("Natural Selection," May 8). Arnhart's argument that Darwinism supports conservative social ideals is based on evolutionary psychology, an approach based on so little evidence that even some Darwinists dismiss it. Arnhart ignores central aspects of Darwinian theory that are deeply inimical to traditional Christianity. Arnhart's argument that Darwinism supports conservative political/economic ideals obscures the fact that Darwinian thinking underlies the "zero-sum" concept that reduces us to competing for limited resources and justifies leftist-managed economies—the exact opposite of creating wealth through new technology and engaging in free-enterprise capitalism. It's no accident

that leftists have historically embraced Darwinism while conservatives have tended to reject it.

Jonathan Wells
Seattle, Wash.

James Seaton responds: Jonathan Wells's complaint about my failing to mention that "central aspects of Darwinian theory . . . are deeply inimical to traditional Christianity" may be based on a misunderstanding. Rather than claiming that Arnhart "does assuage the fears of some Christians . . . that Darwin also undermines belief in God," I intended to say that he does not entirely succeed in doing so.

Generally Speaking

Frederick W. Kagan's "Let the Generals Speak" (May 8) wrongly claims that retired military officers are not subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. All those receiving retired pay are subject to the UCMJ.

Lt. Gen. Bob Springer
USAF (ret.)
Pinehurst, N.C.

Frederick W. Kagan responds: I readily acknowledge that I erred in stating that retired officers are not subject to the UCMJ. The question of the applicability of Article 88—which bans contemptuous speech directed at superiors and civilian leaders—is, however, more complicated. Apart from the fact that there are no cases of attempted prosecutions for violating this article, the standard for preferring such charges is different from the one required to accuse active duty officers. To prosecute a retired officer, the military would have to show that the words used "create a clear and present danger" leading to evils "that Congress has a right to prevent." This hurdle is much higher than the requirement to show for active duty officers that "the speech interferes with . . . the orderly accomplishment of the mission or presents a clear danger to loyalty, discipline, mission, or morale of the troops." Even discussing an Article 88 charge in the context of the retired generals' statements is absurd.

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MARIJUANA AND YOUR TEEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Depression. Suicidal Thoughts. Schizophrenia.

If you have outdated perceptions about marijuana, you might be putting your teen at risk. New research is giving us better insight into the serious consequences of teen marijuana use, especially how it impacts mental health.

Did you know that young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life?[1] And that teens aged 12 to 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts?[2]

And if that's not bad enough, marijuana use in some teens has been linked to increased risk for schizophrenia in later years.[3]

Today's teens are smoking a more potent drug[4] and starting use at increasingly younger ages during crucial brain development years.[5] Still think marijuana's no big deal?

Remember, you are the most important influence in your teen's life when it comes to drugs,[6] so tell your teen the facts about marijuana. Teens who learn about the risks from their parents are less likely to smoke marijuana or use other drugs than teens who don't.

Let your teens know you don't want them using marijuana. Their mental health may depend on it.

Signed,

- *American Psychiatric Association*
- *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*
- *American Society of Addiction Medicine*
- *Asian Community Mental Health Services*
- *Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse*
- *Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.*
- *National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association*
- *National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers*
- *National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare*
- *National Latino Behavioral Health Association*
- *National Medical Association*
- *Office of National Drug Control Policy*
- *Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

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[1]Patton, GC et al. Cannabis use and mental health in young people: cohort study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1195–1198, 2002. [2]Greenblatt, J. Adolescent self-reported behaviors and their association with marijuana use, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1998. [3]Arseneault, L et al. Cannabis use in adolescence and risk for adult psychosis: longitudinal prospective study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1212–1213, 2002; Veen, N et al. Cannabis use and age at onset of schizophrenia. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161: 501–506, 2004. [4]*Marijuana Potency Monitoring Project. Report No. 83*, University of Mississippi, 2003. [5]SAMHSA. Trends in Initiation of Substance Use, 2003. [6]SAMHSA. Parental Disapproval of Youths' Substance Abuse, 2002.

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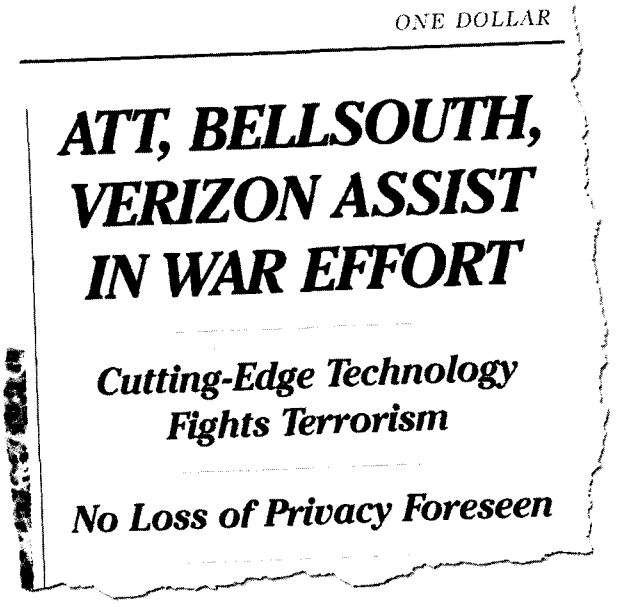
ONE DOLLAR

ATT, BELLSOUTH, VERIZON ASSIST IN WAR EFFORT

Cutting-Edge Technology Fights Terrorism

No Loss of Privacy Foreseen

Oh, sorry, it's not 1942. It's 2006, and these three phone giants are about to be excoriated for cooperating with the war on terror. Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Arlen Specter has demanded that ATT, Verizon, and BellSouth testify under oath about their assistance to the National Security Agency's counterterrorism programs; 50 House Democrats are demanding a criminal investigation by special counsel.

Here we go again: another specious privacy scandal. The disclosure by *USA Today* that these three telecom companies have given the government access to trillions of anonymized domestic calling records has sent Bush administration critics, privacy advocates, and the press into an ecstatic frenzy of denunciation and fear-mongering. This newly energized coalition charges that the White House is trampling citizens' constitutional rights and creating a surveillance state. And the Bush administration has only itself to blame.

Heather Mac Donald is a contributing editor to the Manhattan Institute's City Journal.

Ever since allowing the Pentagon's Total Information Awareness project to go down the tubes in 2003, the administration has failed to explain the potential of data mining, even as it secretly continues to use this vital technology. Thus, at every revelation of a government data mining program, privacy extremists enjoy unchallenged supremacy in characterizing the technology as a massive threat to life as we know it.

Only a paranoid solipsist could feel threatened by the recently revealed calling analysis program. Since late 2001, Verizon, BellSouth, and ATT have connected nearly two trillion calls, according to the *Washington Post*. The companies gave NSA the incoming and outgoing numbers of those calls, stripped of all identifying information such as name or address. No conversational content was included. The NSA then put its supercharged computers to work analyzing patterns among the four trillion numbers involved in the two trillion calls, to look for clusters that might suggest terrorist connections. Though the details are unknown, they might search for calls to known terrorists, or, more speculatively, try to elicit templates of terror calling behavior from the data.

As a practical matter, no one's privacy is violated by such analysis. Memo to privacy nuts: The computer does not have a clue that you exist; it does not know what it is churning through; your phone number is meaningless to it. The press loves to stress the astounding volume of data that data mining can consume—the *Washington Post*'s lead on May 12 warned that the administration had been "secretly . . . assembling gargantuan databases." But it is precisely the size of that data store that renders the image of individualized snooping so absurd.

True, the government can de-anonymize the data if connections to terror suspects emerge, and it is not known what threshold of proof the government uses to put a name to critical phone numbers. But until that point is reached, your privacy is at greater risk from the Goodyear blimp at a Stones concert than from the NSA's supercomputers churning through trillions of zeros and ones representing disembodied phone numbers.

And even after that point is reached, the notion that

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280 million Americans who have not been communicating with al Qaeda are at risk from this quadrillion-bit program is absurd. What exactly are the privacy advocates worried about? That an NSA agent will search the phone records of his ex-wife or of themselves? This quaint scenario completely misunderstands the scale of, and bureaucratic checks on, such data analysis programs.

As a constitutional matter, no one's privacy is violated by such automated analysis of business records.

Senator Dianne Feinstein needs to brush up on her legal doctrine when she decries the program as a "major constitutional confrontation on Fourth Amendment guarantees of unreasonable search and seizure." There is no Fourth Amendment protection for information that you have conveyed to a third party.

Your phone company at the very least—if not a score of marketers—knows your calling history; that history is no longer private, therefore, and the government can obtain your phone records without a judicial warrant. Congress has provided statutory protections for certain kinds of telecommunications information, but those statutes allow telephone companies to share their data with the government for emergencies. After 9/11, a phone executive who didn't believe that the country was in danger of another catastrophic attack was seriously out of touch with reality. And the volume of data requested almost by definition protects the privacy of any individual customer.

The *Washington Post* calls this numbers analysis the "most extensive . . . domestic surveillance [program] yet known involving ordinary citizens and residents." Bunk. The NSA's data mining program is not surveillance; no one is being listened to or observed.

Data mining looks for mathematical patterns in computerized information; it is not a real-time spying operation. The government didn't need to go to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for a wiretap or pen register order (which governs the collection of phone numbers in real time from a single phone) because it is not listening to or recording any individual's calls. FISA is built around the notion of an individualized investigation of specific spies or terrorists; it is seriously outdated for the application of American computer know-how to ferret out terror plots before they happen and before the government has individual suspects in mind.

But it may be too late to convey these truths. The time to explain how data mining protects privacy while providing a crucial tool against unknown mass-murderers was while the Pentagon's Total Information Awareness program was under attack. That program, which hoped to uncover patterns of terrorist activity in publicly available commercial data, was merely in its preliminary research stages, but the Senate killed it in a demagogic display of privacy hysteria.

Having lost that battle without fighting, the administration has gone silent on the value of data mining, presumably terrified of another privacy fiasco. After the revelation last December of another large-scale NSA program analyzing international calls to terror suspects, the administration denied that data mining was involved. It also implied that domestic phone traffic was off-limits. And now, President Bush defends this latest program in the most anodyne of terms, asserting baldly that the "privacy of ordinary Americans is fiercely protected in all our activities." His credibility, after the previous denials of data mining and failure to clarify its character, is, to say the least, weak.

Cooperation between the private sector and intelligence agencies is crucial for uncovering terrorist plots. After 9/11, JetBlue Airways and Northwest Airlines offered privacy-protected passenger records to NASA and the Pentagon for research to see if data-mining could aid in identifying terrorist flight behavior. No passenger's privacy was violated, yet these two companies now face hundreds of billions of dollars in privacy lawsuits. The class action bar is undoubtedly gearing up for a similar assault on ATT, Verizon, and BellSouth, an abuse of tort law that will further discourage patriotic corporate behavior.

The American public is adult enough, one hopes, to cope with the idea of a government computer analyzing commercial and communications data as a protection against terrorism. If only someone would trust them with the facts.

—Heather Mac Donald, for the Editors

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Where does your gasoline dollar go?

In 2005 the industry earned 8.5 cents on every dollar of sales.**

* U.S. Department of Energy
**API calculations based on the *Oil Daily*

Many Americans are concerned about the cost of fuel at the pump, and they naturally ask, "what accounts for the price I pay?"

While there are several components in the retail price of fuel, a single element is by far the most important: crude oil prices. According to a June 2005 report by the Federal Trade Commission, "the world price of crude oil is the most important factor in the price of gasoline."

Rising global demand and political tensions have driven the price of crude oil up, and it now accounts for more than half the price of a gallon of gas.

What else figures in the price at the pump? The cost to refine, distribute and market at local service stations – as well as taxes. The seasonal change to summertime fuel is more challenging this spring due to ethanol-blended gasoline being introduced for the first time in several major markets.

As in any marketplace, fuel prices will fluctuate with supply and demand – and today demand is chasing an increasingly tight supply.

The price at the pump

In fact, the U.S. Department of Energy now forecasts higher prices this summer than last because of a tight world crude oil market and the introduction of new U.S. fuel specifications.

To learn more about fuel prices, what the oil and natural gas industry is doing and what you can do, visit www.api.org.

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Taking a Blunt Approach

Missouri's governor shows how to balance a budget without raising taxes. BY FRED BARNES

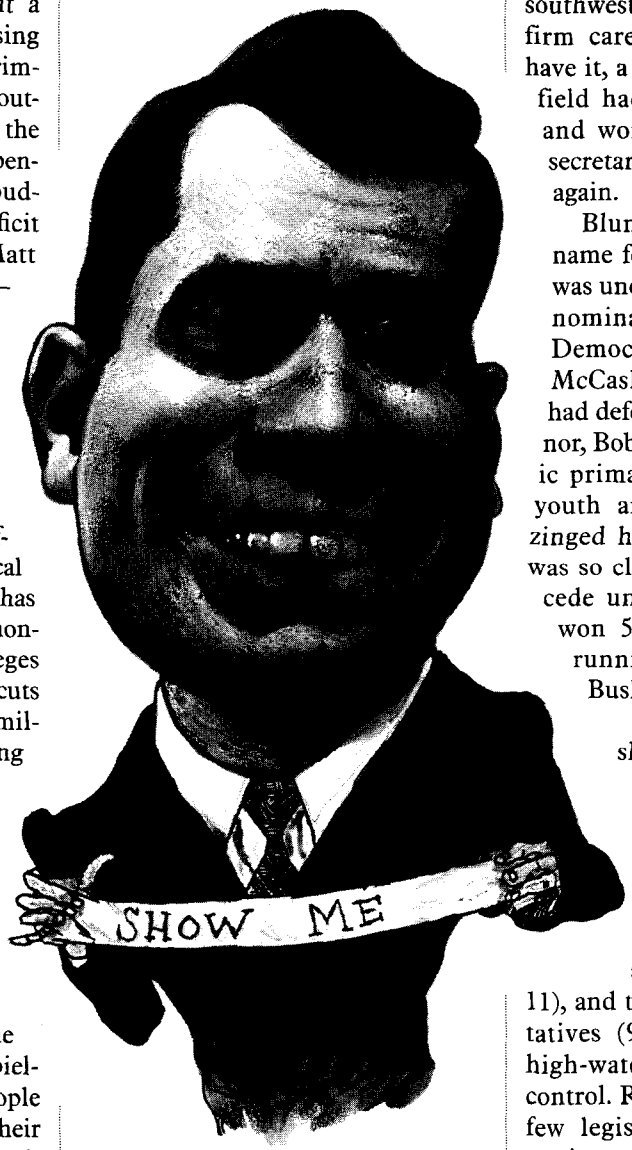
Jefferson City, Missouri

THERE'S A SUREFIRE WAY for a Republican governor to lose favor with the public, the press, and Democrats: wipe out a state's budget deficit without raising taxes. This inevitably involves trimming spending on Medicaid, the out-of-control health care program for the poor that's become the largest expenditure in virtually every state's budget. Faced with a $1.1 billion deficit last year, Missouri governor Matt Blunt chose to restrain spending—especially Medicaid spending—and not to increase taxes. For months, he was pilloried in the Missouri media for cutting off Medicaid recipients. And his approval rating dropped in one poll to 33 percent.

Now, a year later, things are different. It turns out there is political life after spending cuts. Not only has Blunt's popularity risen, he has money to spend on schools and colleges and senior citizens. His spending cuts helped produce a surplus ($80 million) this year. Along with sweeping tort reform and a crackdown on excesses in workman's compensation, his no-new-taxes approach improved the business climate and drove down unemployment.

When General Motors announced it would boost its investment in a Missouri plant, the company's vice president, Joe Spielman, praised Blunt. "A lot of people talk about making their state or their community a good place to do business," he said. "I've got to tell you that this governor has delivered."

At 35, Blunt is the youngest governor in the country. He is not a political visionary, but a traditional conservative determined to hold down taxes and streamline government. "He'd find a way to sell the capitol and lease it back before he'd raise taxes," a lobbyist here says. And Blunt subscribes to a simple rule of politics and life: No pain, no gain.



Matt Blunt

Illustration by Earl Keleny

He comes from a political family. His grandfather was a state legislator. His father, Roy Blunt, was secretary of state for eight years and now is Republican whip, the third-ranking post, in the U.S. House. Blunt graduated from the Naval Academy. After five years in the Navy, he arrived home in Springfield in southwest Missouri in 1998 with no firm career plans. As luck would have it, a state house seat in Springfield had become vacant. He ran and won, then ran statewide for secretary of state in 2000 and won again.

Blunt had made enough of a name for himself by 2004 that he was unopposed for the Republican nomination for governor. His Democratic opponent, Claire McCaskill, was formidable. She had defeated the incumbent governor, Bob Holden, in the Democratic primary. She ridiculed Blunt's youth and inexperience, and he zinged her on taxes. The election was so close McCaskill didn't concede until after midnight. Blunt won 51 percent to 48 percent, running behind President Bush's 53 percent in Missouri.

In capturing the governorship, Blunt rode a Republican wave that has transformed the politics of Missouri. For the first time in 84 years, Republicans control the governor's mansion, the state senate (23-11), and the state house of representatives (97-66). This may be the high-water mark for Republican control. Republicans expect to lose a few legislative seats this fall but retain control of both houses.

Harry Truman wouldn't recognize his home state. The biggest partisan realignment has come in rural Mis-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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souri, where conservative Democrats have turned into reliable Republican voters. The political map of the state is now mostly red with a strip of blue across the middle—the I-70 corridor—from St. Louis to Kansas City, the most populous cities, and running through liberal Columbia, home of the University of Missouri.

Republican victories statewide are hardly guaranteed. In fact, Republican senator Jim Talent is in a tight race for reelection this fall against McCaskill, currently the state auditor. "But Missouri has really changed," says Republican consultant Tony Feather. "It wouldn't be considered a swing state now."

Blunt symbolizes the change. He's neither glamorous nor especially charismatic. He's slight—maybe trim would be a kinder description—and has a gap between his front teeth. He won not as a lone wolf but as an unapologetic Republican. His campaign relied on conventional Republican issues like taxes, spending, government efficiency, and the economy.

As governor, "Matt is a consummate workhorse, not show horse," says Feather. "His usual expression is a perpetual poker-faced seriousness rarely graced by a smile," wrote Steve Kraske of the *Kansas City Star*. His emphasis on spending cuts has given Blunt a reputation for being cold-hearted, and he has done nothing to soften that image. He boasts of never second-guessing his decisions and sleeping well at night.

Blunt confronted a dreadful situation when he took office. Like most states, Missouri has a balanced budget requirement. And his Democratic predecessor, Holden, had used every fiscal trick he could find to meet this obligation while increasing spending. To cover the $1.1 billion deficit, Blunt would have to slash spending, raise taxes, or both.

If he had placed Medicaid off-limits to spending cuts and included a tax hike in his fiscal plan, Blunt might have averted a storm of criticism. But that would merely have postponed the budget crisis until this year. "Without the Medicaid cuts, Matt Blunt's poll numbers would be among the highest in the country," one of his state house allies insists. And that might be true.

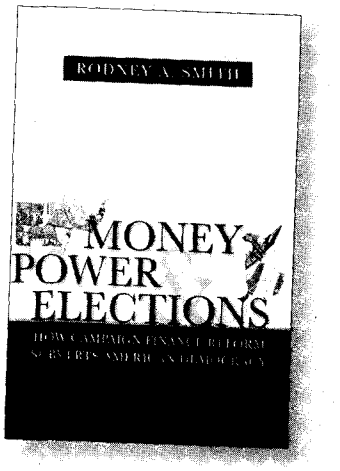
But Medicaid spending was hard to ignore. It covered 16 percent of Missourians and took up 31 percent of the state budget. Blunt decided to investigate the program, deny benefits to those who were ineligible, and tighten the qualifications. He knew he'd be attacked, but the assault was worse than expected. It lasted for most of 2005. "He had his butt kicked over Medicaid," Feather says. Medicaid's share of the state budget, however, has shrunk to 29 percent.

By not flinching, Blunt made himself something of a hero to Missouri Republicans. They tend to gush. "I always come back to the word courage when I think of Matt Blunt," says Dan Mehan, the president of the Missouri chamber of commerce. "He's taken some positions that require a lot of guts," says Mike Gibbons, majority leader in the state senate.

Blunt was criticized for other spending cuts as well, including his elimination of spending for Alzheimer's research. "The state of Missouri is not going to cure Alzheimer's," he told me. Blunt also found that many Republicans had cherished programs they wanted to protect from elimination or cuts in funding. "Even the most conservative people, staunch fiscal conservatives, were upset about some specific program that was being reduced in size and scope."

In year two as governor—2006—Blunt is eager to make state government more lean and efficient. Last year, on his first day in office, he took away the power to collectively bargain that Governor Holden had granted state employees. And he's decreased the number of employees since taking office from roughly 63,000 to fewer than 60,000. "We're not going above 60,000 again," he announced at a meeting on the subject.

Blunt invited me to sit in on that and several other meetings last week. No doubt he and his aides were on their best behavior for my



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benefit. I was most intrigued by the session on state-owned vehicles. Many states don't know how many cars and trucks they own. Until last week, Missouri was one of them. A survey of state-owned vehicles in California couldn't account for some 10,000 of them.

Missouri, the governor's aides discovered, owns 10,834 vehicles. "We should announce that," Blunt declared. "That's a ridiculous number of cars for the state to own. . . . Knowing how many cars we have is a victory in itself." Blunt, by the way, is keen on flex-fuel vehicles that can run on gas or alternative fuels.

When he delivered his second state-of-the-state address in January, Blunt sounded like a man who'd won a jackpot. His pain in 2005 led to gain in 2006. Revenues were up, producing a surplus. And now he could talk about what politicians and particularly governors, including conservative governors, like to talk about: new spending programs—small ones in Blunt's case.

"The sun has risen and Missouri's economy is on the move," he said. "The new budget is balanced without new job-destroying taxes and without borrowing or accounting gimmicks. . . . The budget I am presenting is the first in eight years that requests funding for fewer than 60,000 state employees."

His agenda is not as bold or wrenching as last year's. He's proposed a tax credit for donations to crisis pregnancy centers, an idea suggested by a pro-life leader. But he's split with pro-lifers on stem cell research. He's backing a referendum to allow such research in Missouri.

He also requested a funding hike for, of all things, Medicaid. To fund it at the pre-2005 spending level would cost nearly $1 billion. Blunt wasn't proposing that. But he did get $308 million more for Medicaid, enough to continue health coverage for 16 percent "of our fellow citizens." It kept Medicaid's share of the budget at 29 percent and, just as important, kept the critics off his back. ♦

But Can He Steal Democratic Votes?

Maryland's lieutenant governor runs for the Senate. BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Annapolis, Maryland

IF YOU'VE HEARD of Michael Steele, the Maryland lieutenant governor, chances are you know he's a Republican, a conservative, and an African American—the target of repeated "Uncle Tom" barbs tossed his way by black Democrats.

When Steele declared his candidacy for the Senate seat being vacated by Maryland Democrat Paul Sarbanes last October, the comments from some black officials were all too predictable. The *Washington Times* reported that one state legislator, Baltimore's Salima Siler Marriott, "said Mr. Steele invites comparisons to a slave who loves his cruel master." Blogger Steve Gilliard posted the message "Simple Sambo wants to move to the big house" over a Photoshopped image of Steele wearing minstrel-show blackface.

Even Steele's more responsible critics seem fixated on his race. This largely stems from fears that he will attract black voters to the Republican party. Just before the 2002 election, which Steele won on a ticket with Maryland governor Bob Ehrlich, the *Baltimore Sun* sneered that he "brings little to the team but the color of his skin." More recently, a survey conducted by Democratic pollster Cornell Belcher found that "a majority of African-American voters are open to supporting Steele, particularly younger voters." Belcher recommended that "a persuasion campaign should start as soon as possible to discredit Steele as a viable candidate for the community"—the black community, that is.

This may all prove a false alarm. If Republicans take a drubbing come November, Maryland is about the last state where you'd expect them to pick up a Senate seat. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans nearly two to one. The state hasn't elected a GOP senator since 1980. The general assembly tilts heavily Democratic. John Kerry won Maryland by 13 points; Al Gore by 17 points. Even if Steele can siphon a small percentage of black voters away from the Democrats, it's still a constituency that went 89-11 for Kerry over George W. Bush. *Any* Republican faces an uphill battle in Maryland, even in a good year.

But in his personal as well as in his political life, Steele, 47, is used to challenges, which may explain why he appears so sanguine about the Senate contest. Throughout our interview in his spacious Annapolis office, Steele brims with wonkish policy chatter, charming anecdotes, playful jokes, and toothy smiles. Well over six feet tall, he is also long on charisma and wry humor.

"I like to tell people I'm an African-American, Roman-Catholic Republican—and I like to live dangerously," Steele says. He prides himself on being a maverick: a "center-right" black Republican and a "traditional guy" on values, "who also has the ability to connect with the hip-hop community, [and] to connect with a lot of very strong liberals in Montgomery County." Raised in Washington, D.C., Steele has a B.A. from Johns Hopkins and a law degree from Georgetown, and he served a stint as chairman of the

Duncan Currie is a reporter at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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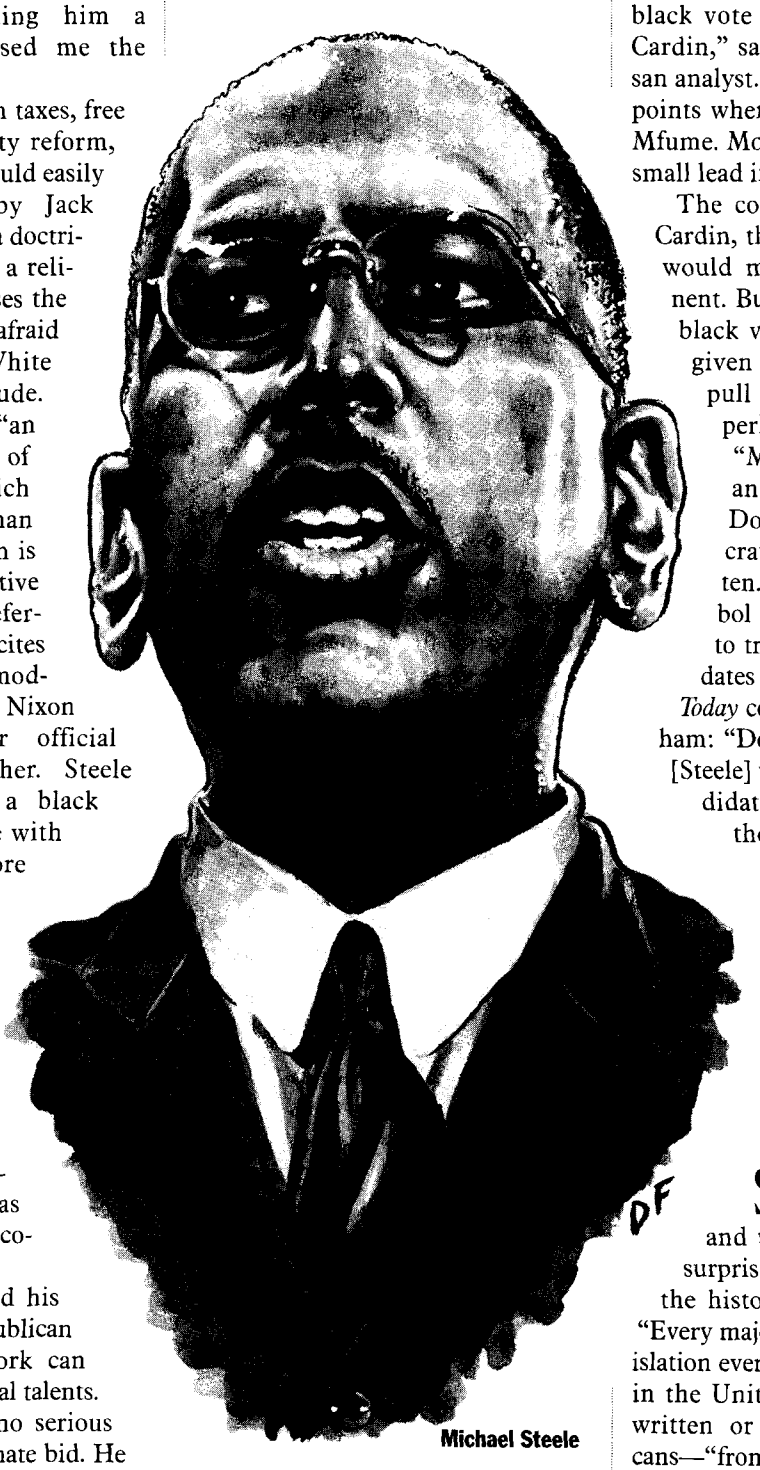
Maryland GOP (the first African American to chair a state party), with several years as a seminarian at Villanova sandwiched in between. Besides Ronald Reagan, he credits his mother, a stalwart "Roosevelt Democrat," for making him a Republican. She "raised me the right way," he grins.

Although his spiel on taxes, free markets, Social Security reform, and economic liberty could easily have been written by Jack Kemp, Steele is hardly a doctrinaire conservative—or a reliable partisan. He opposes the death penalty and is unafraid to zing the Bush White House for its ineptitude. He calls himself "an unqualified supporter" of affirmative action, which sounds less nuanced than it is. "Affirmative action is not quotas, and affirmative action is not racial preferences," Steele says. He cites the chief architect of modern affirmative action, a Nixon administration Labor official named Arthur Fletcher. Steele knew Fletcher, also a black Republican, and spoke with him extensively before Fletcher's death in July 2005. "He was so frustrated and disappointed at how—as he put it—the other party had 'bastardized' affirmative action into a quotas program," Steele told me. "Because it was never about quotas. It was always about creating economic opportunity."

Anyone who watched his speech to the 2004 Republican convention in New York can attest to Steele's rhetorical talents. Small wonder he has no serious primary rivals in his Senate bid. He will, however, have a formidable opponent in the fall—either Rep. Ben Cardin, 62, an elder statesman of Maryland politics, or Kweisi Mfume, 57, the former five-term Maryland congressman and ex-NAACP boss. Both are consistent left-liberals, though Cardin is more moderate and less partisan. Both expect to be well-financedheading into September's Democratic primary. Both draw on sizable bases. And whichever man wins, he will enjoy the "reverse coattails" of Bush's unpopularity.



Michael Steele

Illustration by Drew Friedman

For Steele to win, says Maryland pollster Patrick Gonzales, he'll need to capture roughly 50 percent of independents and peel off a third of the registered Democrats. "We've got him getting 20 percent of the black vote in a matchup with Ben Cardin," says Gonzales, a nonpartisan analyst. That drops by about five points when Steele is paired against Mfume. Most pollsters give Cardin a small lead in the primary.

The conventional wisdom says Cardin, the establishment favorite, would make the stronger opponent. But it's also possible that if black voters feel Mfume wasn't given a fair shake they could pull the lever for Steele, or perhaps just stay home. "Mfume is more than another Senate candidate," Donna Brazile, the Democratic consultant, has written. "He will become a symbol of how Democrats intend to treat qualified black candidates in the future." Says *USA Today* columnist DeWayne Wickham: "Democrats need to counter [Steele] with their own black candidate, or run the risk of further alienating their black base." The Maryland Democratic party has never nominated an African American to run statewide. As Mfume told me, "The issue of race is all over this campaign."

Steele has thought long and hard about blacks and the GOP, and he offers a surprising take. Republicans are the historic party of civil rights. "Every major piece of civil rights legislation ever created and promulgated in the United States Congress" was written or supported by Republicans—"from the very first piece to the last piece, the Voting Rights Act of '65. Every economic tool that's ever been designed by the United States Congress—from 'forty acres and a

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mule' during Reconstruction to affirmative action—was done so by Republicans." Despite all that, Steele argues, the events of the 1960s—from the GOP's reluctance to embrace Martin Luther King to its post-Goldwater adoption of a "southern strategy"—opened the door for blacks to leave the party in droves.

Blacks made crucial strides under Reagan and George H.W. Bush, says Steele, but thanks to the Democrats, "you still had hanging over the party this rhetorical discord about who we are, and what we *really* feel about black people." Then "along comes someone like me, who gets elected state chairman, I'm on the executive committee of the RNC, and I'm telling people, 'Y'all better wake up. Because this is a new era.'" Steele says there's been a nascent shift rightward in the black community, particularly among younger black men "who were all about the American Dream. They read the story. They saw the movie. Now they want to go out and live it. And the reality for them was, Which party was talking to them about that? Which party's *policies* were really addressing that? And it was the Republican party."

This hit home for Steele during the 2002 campaign, when, as he tells it, "A young brother came up to me and he said, 'You know, I'm thinking about voting for you.'" Steele thanked him, and asked why he was hesitant. Well, the young man admitted, he was a tad uneasy about the GOP's attitude toward blacks. He also had qualms about social conservatism. But he ended up by saying, "I love your message on money." Steele, too, is bullish on the GOP's "empowerment" message. "It's one of the things that drew me to the party. It's one of the things that I took from Ronald Reagan's first run [for the White House] in 1976. It's what made me a Republican—that and my mother."

Unlike his youthful supporter, Steele finds common ground with the social right on most core issues. He's staunchly pro-life. He opposes embryonic stem cell research. And he rejects both same-sex marriage and gay civil unions (though he also opposes the Federal Marriage Amendment, preferring the matter be left to the states). While this endears him to national conservatives, it poses a problem in liberal Maryland. Steele caught a barrage of flak this past winter after he indirectly compared embryo-destroying research to medical experiments in Nazi Germany. He later apologized for his offhand remark.

As the Democrats see it, Steele's social views bolster their claim that he is too closely tied to President Bush, who remains woefully unpopular in Maryland. Democrats also howl that Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and ex-White House chief of staff Andy Card have all headlined fundraisers for Steele, whose campaign has already raised over $2.6 million. Last week the *Washington Post* reported that former president George H.W. Bush and his wife Barbara will appear at a Steele event in Chevy Chase, Md., on May 19.

Republicans expect a nasty campaign, the tone of which was set not only by the racist anti-Steele outbursts last fall but also by the revelation that two Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee staffers had illegally acquired a copy of Steele's credit report. The DSCC apparently had no knowledge of this—and the two staffers resigned—but GOP leaders were left fuming. One of the staffers pleaded guilty in March to fraud.

A Rasmussen poll released in late April had Cardin leading Steele by 10 points, 45-35 percent, and Mfume holding a smaller, 4-point edge, 42-38 percent. It may come down to how many onetime Democrats Steele can pick off in Maryland's "Big Three": Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County, all of which lean overwhelmingly Democratic. He should do well in the rest of the state, which generally votes Republican. True to his personality, Steele remains relentlessly upbeat. "I tell people all the time, 'Get your popcorn,'" he says. "It's gonna be fun." ◆

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The Loneliness of the Liberal Hawk

Some good Democratic foreign policy ideas, but no politician to champion them. BY TOM DONNELLY

IT'S TOUGH to be a moderate Democrat. Hatred of George Bush has changed the loyal opposition into the bitter opposition, less interested in policy than in punishing their *bête noire*. It's particularly tough for Democrats who supported the invasion of Iraq, the defining George Bush moment, and who oppose withdrawal. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, the very model of a modern "defense Democrat"—not to mention the party's 2000 vice presidential nominee—now faces overwhelming votes of "no confidence" from Connecticut Democratic town councils.

The conundrum is acute for the rising generation of moderate Democrats who may run for president, if the performances last week by former Virginia governor Mark Warner and Sen. Evan Bayh at an event sponsored by the Progressive Policy Institute are any indication. Speaking in support of PPI's new collection of essays, *With All Our Might*—a valiant attempt to define "a progressive strategy for defeating jihadism and defending liberty"—both Warner and Bayh clung safely to the anti-Bush orthodoxy. Neither rose to the occasion as laid out by PPI president Will Marshall: "It's really time to stop reacting to the administration and start defining what we're for on national security, to look beyond the fumbles in Iraq."

Warner approached the challenges as though he were still governor. "We're at our strongest when our institutions of government are run with competence and coordination. Our national security departments must work together to win this war, not simply compete against each other," he said. All true enough—it's hard to defend the Bush administration or the Rumsfeld Pentagon for competence and coordination—but Warner appeared unwilling to accept that winning the war demands, first and foremost, the use of military force. "We can't put the whole burden of fighting Islamic terrorism on our armed services," he said, a moment before parroting the very line of the Rumsfeld Pentagon: "As many of our generals themselves have said, Islamic terrorism cannot be defeated by military power alone."

Bayh sounded like nothing so much as a senator. His remarks were laced with cutting-edge rhetoric: "This is . . . our first post-nation-state war. . . . The second thing that characterizes this new phenomenon is . . . the asymmetry of the conflict." Bayh had given serious thought to these concepts, but, like Warner, he did not convey a sense of urgency about winning. "Number one," he said, "we can't define America's security only by the strength of our arms. It must also be defined by the strength of our economy, the strength of our finances, our energy independence."

At bottom, both men seem to see competence—in a kind of "good government" sense—as the true measure of a wartime president. Bayh put it most revealingly: "There's no greater test of a commander in chief than how [he] *manages* a war." It's not picking nits to emphasize the verb "to manage." It's the core idea for moderate Democrats, but a very different idea than "to lead," which is what matters in war.

If there's a big gap between these centrist politicians and the Nancy Pelosi wing in Congress or the *MoveOn.org* wing at large, there's also a gap between the moderate politicians and those wonks-in-waiting who would likely build the policy factory in a future Democratic administration. PPI's book *With All Our Might* actually represents an impressive lineup of younger defense and security intellectuals, many of whom worked in the Clinton administration. And they're more hawkish, in general, than Warner or Bayh.

Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution, whose prewar *The Threatening Storm* made a forceful case for invading Iraq, still sounds like a closet neocon. His essay on "A Grand Strategy for the Middle East" argues that "whether you supported the war or not, it is all about Iraq now." Withdrawal is not an option: "We cannot simply walk away from Iraq without repercussions. In that sense, Iraq is decidedly not Vietnam." While offering a comprehensive critique of Bush administration failures in Iraq, he emphasizes the military and strategic shortcomings; Pollack sees clearly that the first order of business is to establish security, which means fighting.

PPI's own Jan Mazurek is even tougher on Middle East strategy than Pollack. Where Pollack imagines, in keeping with the elite conventional wisdom of both parties, that China can easily be made a partner for progress in the region, Mazurek sees that the People's Republic, by its own choices, is creating the conditions for an even greater challenge. "Beijing is striking up cordial relationships with a motley array of tyrants and rogue states with which the United States is at odds," he writes. "In fact, competition between China and the United States for oil and influence in oil-rich countries could become the 21st-century equivalent of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union in the cold war."

And there are two very fine essays

Tom Donnelly is a resident fellow at AEI and editor of Armed Forces Journal.

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on military matters. James Blaker and Steven Nider call for an expanded Army and commit the ultimate Democratic apostasy: "The military budget—which currently consumes a much smaller percentage of U.S. GDP than it did during the cold war, on average—will probably need to grow in the short term." Perhaps most surprising is Melissa Tryon's remarkably sensitive examination of current military culture, an essay that should be required reading for all post-Vietnam politicians. She understands that people in uniform "see the defense of our country as a calling, and one of the greatest forms of service." They also have a deep commitment to victory that "leads to anger at what is widely seen as 'defeatism' among those who declare that the Iraq war is 'unwinnable.' . . . What service members want most is to see America succeed in Iraq."

It's ironic that the current president, a Republican, is a visionary liberal, while those who seem to be his natural lieutenants are Democrats without the prospect of a commander in chief who shares their commitment. The ever-optimistic Will Marshall thinks the Democratic leadership, the "presidential party," will come around. Maybe. But the Warners and the Bayhs—to say nothing of the rest of the likely candidates—sure aren't there yet. ♦

Tony Blair's Musical Chairs

The end of the road for New Labour.

BY GERARD BAKER

WHEN A BELEAGUERED British prime minister fired a bunch of his closest cabinet colleagues in the 1960s, the grubby desperation of the move was well captured by an opponent's quip: "Greater love hath no man than this," he said —"than to lay down his friends for his life."

As so many doomed prime ministers have done before him, Tony Blair has reached for the axe and chopped some of his longest-serving allies in a frenzied bid to extend the tenure of his failing premiership. The day after his ruling Labour party suffered its worst losses in local elections since coming to power in 1997, the British prime minister quickly dumped his home secretary and one of his few remaining close political allies, Charles Clarke. He stripped John Prescott, his deputy prime minister, of seemingly all but the ceremonial responsibilities of his post, and he demoted another ally, Jack Straw, the foreign secretary, to the menial role of managing the government's legislative business as leader of the House of Commons.

Now, in fairness, there was a very good case for each of these humiliations. The week before the dismal local election results, Clarke was forced to admit he had been presiding over a shambles in the nation's prison system, in which more than 1,000 foreign prisoners had been released into the community instead of being deported.

That very same day, it was revealed that Prescott, 67, a brutish former seaman with a capacity to mangle the English language that makes George W. Bush sound like Wordsworth, had been exposed as having an affair with a jaunty 43-year-old lass who worked in his office. Their ardor, we know, thanks to plentiful photographic evidence supplied to the tabloids, had been consummated on all kinds of government property, while Prescott was supposed to be taking care of his considerable ministerial responsibilities.

Straw had spent the last few months telling anyone who would listen, in the highest pitched shriek possible, that there was no way anyone was going to attack Iran and anybody who said so (unnamed members of the Bush administration) was "nuts." This left Blair's foreign affairs adviser at Downing Street with the tiresome job of having to call around after every such outburst from the Foreign Office to explain to friends and allies that this was not the official government policy, which was to support tough measures against Iran and not rule out any course of action.

So the case for moving these three distinctly uncomical stooges from the prime time schedules was not, on its merits, a bad one. But that is not how it looked to a British public bored and frustrated with nine years of Blair government. It looked rather like the last desperate throw of a man well past his sell-by date. And the sad, unpalatable, barely utterable truth, acknowledged even by the prime minister's closest friends, is that it was.

Ever since Blair announced before

Gerard Baker, U.S. editor of the Times *of London, is a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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AP / Richard Lewis

Tony Blair with John Prescott, in happier times

last year's general election that he would not seek a fourth term if elected (the current one being his third), he has been like a man in a coma, lying there in nominal control of his mortality but with no real abilities, his friends and family squabbling over whether and when to pull the plug.

With every new blow to his credibility, the case for Blair staying on one more day gets weaker. Even his most ardent supporters now admit the end is near. Unofficially they are telling Blair's critics in the Labour party he will serve just one more year. They make the case, gamely, that much needs to be done in that time. Decisions will be made on extending Britain's nuclear power program, for example, and agreeing with Washington on a successor for Trident, the nation's nuclear deterrent. Both are determinations which it would be better for Blair to make in his twilight than for his designated successor, the increasingly impatient Gordon Brown, to have to deal with.

But no one is confident that he will remain on this political life support even for another year. Still, that is not the most important thing that changed in the last week. Blair's demise was already in the cards; now the country has seen the first intimation of the mortality of the whole government.

Labour is in much deeper trouble than it has been since the Conservatives disastrously self-destructed in the mid-1990s. When Brown takes over, he will assume the leadership of a demoralized, cantankerous party whose principal characters are wandering around in an embittered rage of mutual recrimination and ideological strife. It is not at all clear that Brown, never the most diplomatic or courteous of managers, will be able to keep this fractious bunch together.

Meanwhile the opposition Conservative party looks positively sprightly for the first time in more than a decade. Under its new leader David Cameron, it scored well in the local elections. Cameron is young, clever, and rather appealing—three uncommon traits in leading Conservatives in the last ten years. And so the direction of British politics is, in party terms at least, unclear.

Blair's legacy is a very uncertain one. His was intended to be a reforming, radical project. In foreign affairs he led Britain in a more assertive global role: He did much good in playing America's loyal ally over Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq—though it was ultimately that last choice that cost him the rest of his prime ministership.

But, in domestic political and ideological terms, his legacy is much less positive. He came belatedly to a reform program to introduce more private enterprise into Britain's public sector health and education bureaucracies, but only after he had poured billions of extra pounds of taxpayers' money into these bloated beasts in the first place. And even his recent, limited reforms will go largely by the wayside under Brown, who will need to curry favor with his party's left.

The worse news is that the resurgent Conservatives are unrecognizable as Margaret Thatcher's party of freedom-promoting radicals. Blair's unpopularity spilled over into mistrust of his public sector reform efforts, and the New Conservatives are distinctly wary of challenging the orthodoxies that hold British politics in thrall. Cameron thinks global warming is the biggest challenge his country and the world face—and in between photo ops in front of melting Norwegian glaciers, he seems committed to maintaining the high taxes, high spending, and nanny-state politics that are steadily driving Britons towards serfdom.

An old joke from the 1960s had a prime minister explaining to an impressionable young backbencher the ways of American politics. He put it this way: "In America there are two political parties. The Republican party is very much like our Conservative party. And the Democratic party is very much like our . . . Conservative party."

The same cynicism can now be applied by Americans to modern British politics: The Labour party is very much like our Democratic party. And the Conservative party is very much like our . . . Democratic party. An odd legacy for a prime minister who thought himself a worthy successor to Margaret Thatcher. ♦

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The CIA 1, Bush 0

The age of reform ends after 18 months

By Stephen F. Hayes

Porter Goss's tenure as director of central intelligence began with a public spat between the new reform-minded CIA leadership and an intransigent bureaucracy. Now, 18 months later, it is ending in a cloud of confusion. Goss is gone and so are his agents of change. Two of the CIA officials at the heart of that opening battle—Mary Margaret Graham and Stephen Kappes—have been promoted. And the old guard is happy.

"The move was seen as a direct repudiation of Goss's leadership and as an olive branch to CIA veterans disaffected by his 18-month tenure," wrote Peter Baker and Charles Babington in the *Washington Post*. Yet Goss had taken to the CIA the high expectations of many top Washington policymakers who work on intelligence issues.

"Porter Goss's confirmation . . . represents perhaps the most important changing of the guard for our intelligence community since 1947," the year the CIA was created, said Pat Roberts, the Kansas Republican who chairs the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, on the day Goss was confirmed. "He will be the first director of central intelligence in a new, and hopefully better, intelligence community."

And now he's gone. So what happened?

Goss was sworn in as CIA director on September 22, 2004, two days after the Senate voted 77-17 to confirm him. Although his hearings came in the midst of a heated presidential campaign, Goss managed to win the votes of most Senate Democrats.

On September 30, Goss named Michael Kostiw, the staff director of the House Intelligence Committee's subcommittee on terrorism, executive director of the CIA. Within days, a leak to the *Washington Post* revealed that Kostiw had left the Agency in the early 1980s in the wake of a shoplifting incident, and he promptly withdrew from consideration.

Welcome to the CIA, Mr. Goss. Enjoy the ride.

On November 5, Goss's new chief of staff Patrick Murray confronted Mary Margaret Graham, then serving as associate deputy director for counterterrorism in the directorate of operations. The two discussed several items, including the prospective replacement for Kostiw, a CIA veteran named Kyle "Dusty" Foggo. Murray had a simple message: No more leaks.

Graham took offense at the accusatory warning and notified her boss, Michael Sulick, who in turn notified his boss, Stephen Kappes. A meeting of Goss, Murray, Sulick, and Kappes followed. Goss attended most of the meeting, in which the two new CIA leaders reiterated their concern about leaks. After Goss left, Murray once again warned the two career CIA officials that leaks would not be tolerated. According to a source with knowledge of the incident, Sulick took offense, called Murray "a Hill puke," and threw a stack of papers in his direction.

Goss summoned Kappes the following day. Although others in the new CIA leadership believed Sulick's behavior was an act of insubordination worthy of firing, Goss didn't go quite that far. He ordered Kappes to reassign Sulick to a position outside of the building. Goss suggested Sulick be named New York City station chief. Kappes refused and threatened to resign if Sulick were reassigned. Goss accepted his resignation and Sulick soon followed him out the door.

A *Washington Post* story on November 13 and a follow-up the next day reported that Goss staffers were "disgruntled" former CIA officials who were "known widely" for their "abrasive management style." One was "highly partisan." On the other side of the dispute, judging from the *Post* accounts, were highly respected career civil servants.

It was a characterization that would persist throughout Goss's tenure at the Agency. And it was deeply misleading.

Elements of the CIA have been in near-open revolt against the Bush administration since shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, despite the fact that Bush retained CIA director George Tenet, a Clinton appointee and former Democratic Hill staffer. The CIA staff is huge—by some estimates nearly 25,000—so attempts to ascribe views to "the Agency" are imprecise. Many CIA officials simply do their jobs, sometimes at great personal risk, and deserve the gratitude of their country.

But the notion that the CIA was apolitical until Porter Goss and his staff arrived is silly. It wasn't.

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

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Examples of political meddling at the CIA are plentiful. Here are a few:

• In July 2003, Joseph Wilson went public about his trip to Niger to explore claims that Iraqi officials had sought uranium from the African nation. Wilson had been sent despite (or because of) the fact that he was a fervent critic of Bush's Middle East policy. Although the details of the trip were classified, Wilson never signed a nondisclosure agreement and was thus free to discuss his trip and misreport its findings. So he did.

• After the identity of Wilson's wife was allegedly leaked, then published in a Robert Novak column, the CIA formally referred the leak, a potential crime, to the Justice Department. A leak of the existence of the classified referral—a leak that almost certainly came from the CIA—led directly to the appointment of special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald. The CIA, perhaps fearful of where an investigation of the second leak might lead, did not refer *that* potential crime to the Justice Department.

• On July 15, 2004, an anonymous CIA official published a blistering attack on the Bush administration and, to a lesser extent, the CIA. The text had been through the CIA's pre-publication review and the author—subsequently identified as Michael Scheuer, the longtime head of the CIA's bin Laden unit—was granted permission to talk to the media. But when Scheuer used these interviews to criticize the CIA as well as the administration, the Agency quickly shut him up. "As long as the book was being used to bash the president," he later told Dana Priest of the *Washington Post*, "they gave me carte blanche to talk to the media."

• On September 16, 2004, the *New York Times* had a story about a leaked classified CIA analysis of Iraq. "A classified National Intelligence Estimate prepared for President Bush in late July spells out a dark assessment of prospects for Iraq, government officials said Wednesday. The estimate outlines three possibilities for Iraq through the end of 2005, with the worst case being developments that could lead to civil war, the officials said. The most favorable outcome described is an Iraq whose stability would remain tenuous in political, economic and security terms." Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry immediately used the report to question Bush administration claims that elections could be held in January 2005 and to accuse the Bush administration of living in a "fantasy world of spin."

• In a column published September 27, 2004, Robert Novak reported that a senior CIA official had briefed a group of business executives in northern California with the approval of his "management team" at the Agency. The official, Paul Pillar, harshly criticized the Bush administration and the Iraq war. His attack, which came less than two months before the 2004 presidential election, was not off the record. Although the ground rules stipulated that the official was to remain anonymous, the substance of his remarks could be reported.

If there were any doubt that these leaks—and many others—were designed to undermine President Bush's reelection effort, those doubts were put to rest a short time later. "The fact that the agency was leaking isn't denied by some," according to a November 2005 account in the *American Prospect*. W. Patrick Lang, former chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency's Middle East division, spoke openly about the effort in an interview with the magazine. "Of course they were leaking. They told me about it at the time. They thought it was funny. They'd say things like, 'This last thing that came out, surely people will pay attention to that. They won't reelect this man.'"

Goss arrived at the CIA with at least two goals: stemming the flow of leaks from the Agency and reforming the directorate of operations (DO). They were difficult tasks. The DO has long viewed itself as untouchable, a problem for a bureaucracy that emphasizes recruitment numbers over risk-taking, and budget increases over penetration of the enemy. (See Reuel Marc Gerecht's "The Sorry State of the CIA," July 19, 2004, in this magazine.) Others who have tried to reform the DO have met with little success. (John Deutch comes to mind.) The DO is virtually impervious to change.

Weeks after Goss arrived at the CIA, a "decorated former case officer" told the *Nation* about the changes sought at the DO. "From here on out, elements of the DO especially will effectively slow or close down; directives will be ignored or carried out at a leisurely pace," said the officer, in comments published in the December 13, 2004 issue. From the beginning, then, the bureaucracy was determined to fight.

Stopping leaks would prove no easier. But, on April 19, 2006, Goss had one high-profile success. He fired Mary McCarthy, a senior official in the CIA's Office of the Inspector General, after she acknowledged discussing classified information with reporters. (McCarthy later denied the charges through a spokesman.) CIA officials will not discuss the specifics of the case, although two sources with knowledge of the leaks say that they were serious. "They have badly, badly compromised national security," says one source. "They were extraordinarily damaging."

CIA officials refuse to speculate on whether McCarthy was one of those who leaked so the American public would not "reelect this man." That she contributed large sums of money to the Kerry campaign and the Democratic National Committee shortly before the election is, however, suggestive.

Not surprisingly, reporters on the intelligence beat (some of whom presumably had received leaks from McCarthy) wrote long tributes to her professionalism. Her

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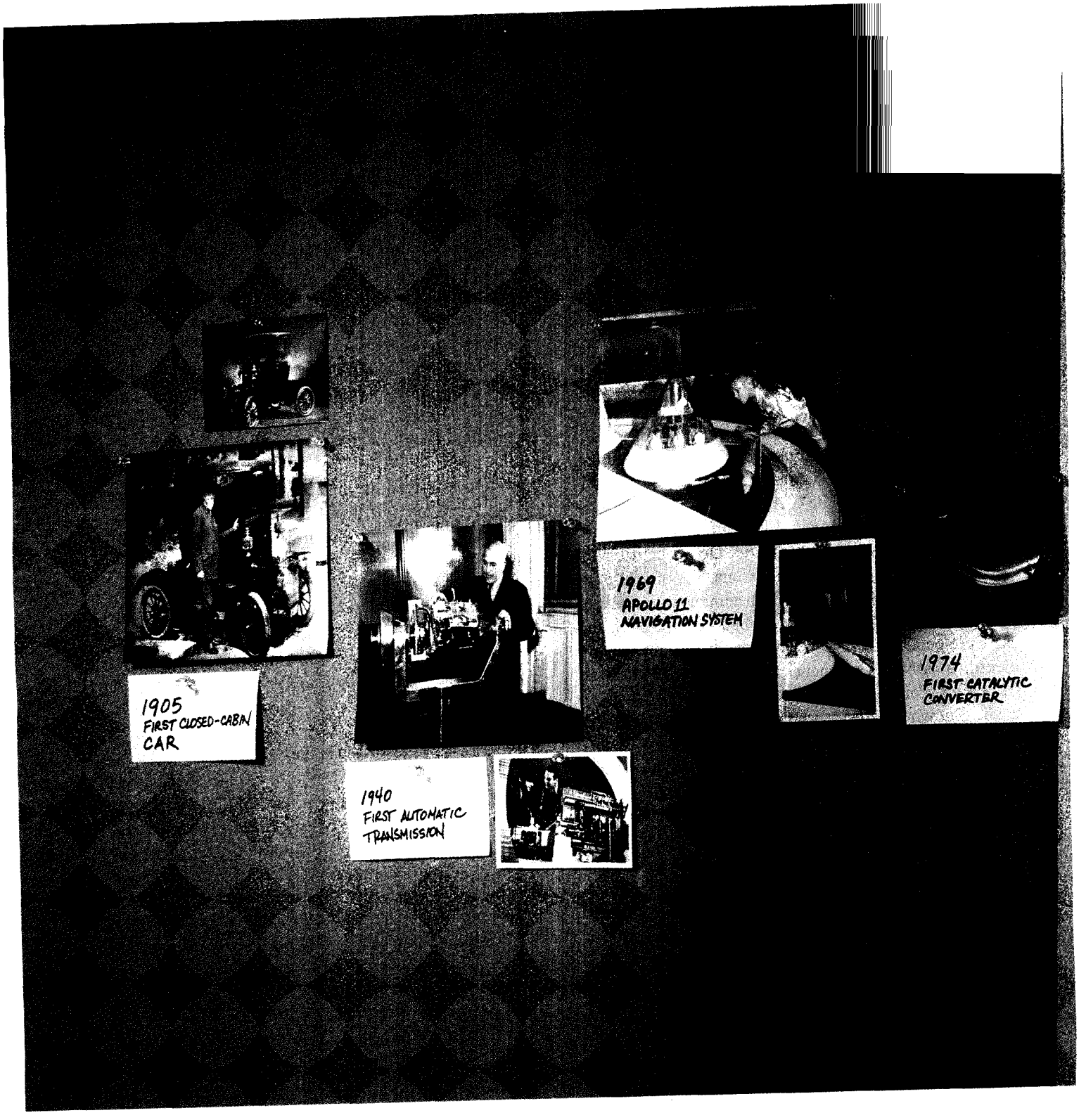

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former colleagues spoke highly of her, and Democratic politicians, including John Kerry himself, lined up to declare her efforts patriotic.

On the other side? Silence. The White House said little about the termination and nothing at all in support of the CIA director. Goss associates say he was surprised and disappointed that senior Bush administration officials chose not to offer any public support of his efforts.

It was an only-in-Washington moment: A senior CIA official fired after she acknowledged leaking classified information—information that reportedly damaged national security—is lionized, while the CIA director who terminated her is accused of a witch hunt. And the White House says nothing in support of the man it charged with cleaning up the Agency and clamping down on leaks.

In retrospect, it was a sign of things to come.

At about 10:30 A.M. on Friday, May 5, the chairmen of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees—Representative Pete Hoekstra and Senator Pat Roberts—received urgent phone calls from the White House. Hoekstra was attending the funeral of a Michigan soldier killed in Iraq and could not immediately be reached.

The news would come as a surprise: Porter Goss was resigning as CIA director. The announcement was scheduled for approximately three hours later. No reason was given for his departure.

After the announcement, on Friday night, Hoekstra received a call from Candy Wolff, head of congressional relations for the White House. Wolff was calling to let the House Intelligence chairman know that Air Force General Michael Hayden would be nominated Monday to replace Goss. Hoekstra said that he had concerns about the fact that Hayden was still on active duty, and Wolff told him that someone else from the White House would be calling.

In the meantime, "senior administration officials" offered anonymous criticism of Goss in interviews with reporters, something that did not go over well with Goss's former colleagues in the House. And while Goss decided that he would not speak publicly about his resignation, he told former colleagues and associates eager to defend him that they were free to do so.

On Saturday, both Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte and National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley called Hoekstra to discuss the changes at the CIA. Hadley attempted to assuage Hoekstra's concerns about Hayden by touting the man chosen to be Hayden's top deputy, a CIA veteran who would be well liked at Langley but whom he did not name. Hoekstra made clear his concerns about Hayden and told Hadley he was not supportive of the changes.

On Sunday, Hoekstra went public with his concerns, telling *Fox News Sunday* host Chris Wallace that Hayden would be "the wrong person" for the job. The same day, the *Washington Post* reported that former senior intelligence officials were contacted about the appointment of Hayden's top deputy. The *Post* did not name the prospective nominee but quoted a former senior official who said, "The Agency, and particularly the DO, will be happy with this choice."

The next day, the White House made its announcement: Hayden was Bush's choice to run the CIA. In a press briefing afterwards, without being asked, Negroponte told reporters that Stephen Kappes was "the leading candidate" to be Hayden's deputy.

Jane Harman, ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, released a statement expressing concern that Hayden was too close to the White House. At the same time, however, Harman endorsed Kappes. As her statement said:

> Some of these concerns can be alleviated if Steve Kappes is named as Hayden's deputy. Kappes would go a long way to reassuring the workforce. As a civilian with a distinguished career in human intelligence, Kappes would send the right signal to the women and men who serve at CIA. Kappes also stood up to the Agency's previous management team—evidence that he is willing to speak 'truth to power.'

It remains unclear why the White House would think that the selection of Kappes, who left the CIA after his public dispute with Goss, might reassure members of Congress, especially Republicans, eager to reform the Agency. Former colleagues say that Kappes is a smart and savvy veteran of the Agency's operations side. He is not, however, a reformer. They describe Kappes as an ardent, sometimes reflexive, defender of the CIA bureaucracy.

Harman was not the only one happy about Kappes's return to the CIA. "It's a phenomenal choice," said A.B. "Buzzy" Krongard, a former executive director of the CIA, replaced by Goss, in an interview with the *Washington Post*: "It's an admission that it was a big mistake for Goss to bring in the people he did and let them loose with no adult supervision."

ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross, guest-hosting the *Charlie Rose* show Monday night, interviewed former deputy CIA director John McLaughlin. Ross said that people he had spoken with "said that the selection of Kappes indicated the purge that Porter Goss had attempted was over, that it was back to business as usual as it had been 20 months ago." Ross asked McLaughlin: "Is that accurate?"

McLaughlin praised Kappes and replied, "Yeah, I think—I think that's basically an accurate assessment."

So it's business as usual at the CIA. The White House took on the Agency. And the Agency won. ♦

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Can Immigration Reform Work?

A father of immigrants has a few practical questions

By Lawrence B. Lindsey

Like everyone else in America, I am the biological product of a variety of waves of immigration to this continent, including some pretty early ones. Some of my ancestors were the first Europeans to cross the Hudson River from New Amsterdam and settle in the wilds of what is now New Jersey. But more relevant to today's immigration debate is that I am also the father of three immigrants to America who came here as infants or toddlers.

That naturally makes me a supporter of immigration. It also favorably disposes me to "comprehensive" immigration reform of the kind the president supports. The great majority of immigrants (legal and illegal) come here to work hard and make a better life for themselves. Moreover, the "send them home" alternative is highly impractical, even if most of its advocates are well meaning. But my firsthand experience with the immigration process for my children suggests that the pro-reform camp inside the Beltway has focused exclusively on getting legislation passed, and forgotten about the practical realities of implementing reform.

Government has never been known as an efficient agent of change. Twenty years ago we had an immigration reform that provided amnesty and was supposed to solve our immigration problem. But that last reform failed, as vividly demonstrated by millions of people in the streets waving the flags of their nations of origin, and scores of Minutemen sitting in lawn chairs on the border armed with radios to report illegals. And the costs of the failure to the social fabric are real. They include increased polarization over the immigration issue that will only deepen if nothing is done. Frankly, we can't afford another failure of government implementation. So, it is important to consider some practical realities that are now being ignored.

Lawrence B. Lindsey is president and CEO of the Lindsey Group and former chief economic adviser to President Bush.

The front lines of immigration policy implementation are America's consulates in large cities around the world. Long before sunrise, queues form at these offices to apply for entry into America. The "entry window" to the office for an interview is often quite short, maybe two or three hours. If you're not in line early enough to get a number that allows you to have an interview that day, you're out of luck. The interview may well be one of several, even if you only want to go to America for a "visit."

If you wave an American passport (as I did), you get to go into a second, much shorter, line and, usually, an indoor waiting room, away from the rain, heat, or cold. If you've done your homework, or someone has done it for you, you have a prearranged appointment, so the wait isn't too long. That is particularly helpful if, say, you're bouncing a one-year-old on your knee.

The consular officials are generally pleasant (at least to American citizens), but they are part of a process designed to be fairly tough in order to prevent people from entering America under false pretenses. For example, in the case of an adopted foreign orphan, it may be obvious that the baby can't answer questions, but the baby still has to be presented (along with tons of paperwork) to prove he or she is a real person. Our experience was relatively painless, in large part because we'd dotted the proverbial i's and crossed the proverbial t's before showing up. But, if your paperwork is not in order, it can take weeks or months, a long time if you're living in a foreign hotel room with an infant.

If you're not a citizen, the lines are longer, and the rules are tougher. The job of the consular officials is to make sure that those applying to visit don't stay, and that those applying to stay meet all of the requirements that Congress has passed. One Bulgarian couple we know wanted to visit their son who was going to school in America. After several visits to the consulate, the U.S. official decided to let the mother visit, but the father had to stay behind, in large part to ensure the mother's return to Bulgaria.

Those applying to come for good face a higher hurdle. At present, there are hundreds of thousands of people

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around the world who are waiting to immigrate legally to America. They have already waited in line to get their first appointment, then to submit the paperwork, then been called back to answer more questions. And still, they wait. In places like Hong Kong, the waiting time may be as long as 15 years. Most of these people have relatives—cousins or grandchildren, for example—who live and work and pay taxes in America and even have become American citizens.

While the process isn't pretty, there is no good alternative. Permission to reside in America is very valuable. Even permission to visit is, for many people, the opportunity of a lifetime. Unlike some nations—Canada, for example—we do not "sell" residency to people who promise to bring in investment money and create jobs. As economists would say, if you're not going to ration by price, you're going to ration by queue.

Comprehensive immigration reform promises that people already in the United States illegally can apply for citizenship, but requires them to "go to the back of the line." But a key question is, the back of which line? The reform bill before the Senate doesn't require illegal immigrants to go back home—to, say, Hong Kong, to the end of the 10-to-15-year line there—to get a green card. Instead, it allows the current illegals to receive their green card immediately—having, in effect, jumped the line at the U.S. consulate abroad. Then, like other green card holders, they will be able to work here, collect government benefits like food stamps and Medicaid, and travel as freely as if they had a U.S. passport.

The line the current illegals will go to the back of is the citizenship line. Under the proposed law, current illegals, newly minted green card in hand, will have to wait six years, then get in line to apply for citizenship. But even after six years, they will be years ahead of many people who have gone through the legal process and are waiting overseas for a consular official to let them come here. Once those who have been playing by the rules all along get here, they too have to wait six years before getting in line for citizenship.

If we really mean "the back of the line," that should be behind everyone who is already in the pipeline to come here legally. If you are granted your green card under the new "guest worker" system, you shouldn't be able to apply for citizenship until after everyone already on queue has had their citizenship adjudicated. It's a simple matter of not rewarding people for line-jumping.

This is more than an appeal for elementary fairness. There is a very practical reason to prevent queue jumping: It helps consular officials keep order on the front lines of immigration policy. How can anyone enforce the rules for entry to America if line-jumping becomes the law of the land? Once the world knows that we make citizenship easier for those who break the rules, enforcing the rules becomes a nonstarter.

We supporters of immigration reform correctly deride the "ship them home" crowd for gross impracticality. But any kind of queue-jumping allowed by a new reform will create a law-enforcement nightmare for every American consulate on the planet. Worse, every person to whom we grant citizenship has uncles, aunts, grandparents, and cousins who can apply to settle here legally on grounds of family reunification. They, like others now waiting around the world, will have the choice of whether or not to play by the rules. This is our chance to establish the credibility of our rules, to make plain that in the future we will enforce them. If we don't, why bother having rules in the first place?

The second reality we supporters of reform are ignoring is the sheer immensity of the program we are proposing to implement inside our own borders. Anyone in the Washington, D.C., area can begin to get a feel for this by driving down Fairfax Drive near I-66 in Arlington, Virginia, past the local office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, early on a weekday morning. Just as at all those U.S. consulates around the world, the line forms well before the doors open. If you show up at opening time, forget it. You won't be able to file your paperwork that day.

No one who's been through the naturalization process (as I have three times) will tell you that the INS is overstaffed, overfunded, or particularly user-friendly. Once, having checked the website on how to file a particular form, I took off early for N. Fairfax Drive to jump through the requisite hoops for one of my children. After several hours, I got my chance to hand the documents to the lady at the window. She looked them over and finally concluded, "I can't accept this, it has to be mailed."

I pointed out that the website had said it had to be hand-delivered, to which she responded that the rules had changed the week before. Maybe it was the look on my face, maybe the fact that I was obviously a taxpaying citizen who might actually know how to complain, but she eventually relented and made an exception. One suspects that such victories for common sense are rare, particularly for noncitizens. Serving the needs of noncitizens in a speedy manner is not a budgetary priority.

But there is a difference between bureaucratic slowness and rigidity and the complete breakdown of the process. In 2004 the INS issued 946,000 green cards and naturalized 537,000 people. The proposed immigration reform anticipates giving green cards to up to 11 million people in one fell swoop and making them eligible for citizenship six years later. It is inconceivable that the INS could handle an eleven-fold increase in its workload. Do we really intend to

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pass a bill that purports to document these 11 million people without setting up a system capable of providing them the promised documentation? If we don't, everyone else who is already here legally but needs a visa update, or has adopted a foreign-born child, or wants his aging mother to join him in America, will get swamped by the tsunami of newly legalized people seeking documentation.

Nor would this problem be easy to solve, even if Congress and the president were willing to budget for the flood of new work brought on by reform. Government bureaucrats require recruitment, background investigations by the Office of Personnel Management, training, and supervision by experienced personnel. Nearly four years after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the government is still sorting out organizational tangles, and that was a mere merger of agencies, not a massive expansion.

Then there is the issue of software—a term that covers a host of troubles. The proposed law contemplates that those issued "guest worker" status will be allowed to apply for citizenship if they perform the normal functions of citizens: paying their taxes, not breaking the law, and so on. Are we going to link the new "Earned Citizenship" program computer to the IRS computer to make sure taxes have been paid? How is the new program going to link with hundreds of state and local law enforcement authorities to discover which individuals have been law abiding?

There will be horror stories along the way, even if a serious effort is made to make the program work. Some violent criminal will not have made it into the INS data base, providing fodder for anti-immigrant talk radio. Some name confusion will cause an exemplary resident to be deported, leading to cries of racism by activist groups. With so many political factions benefiting from the perception of failure, the current lack of forethought about these problems is stunning.

This brings us to a third practical reality: the need to create a certificate of legal residency that is actually worth something. The last immigration reform, the Simpson-Mazzoli Act of 1986, theoretically requires that all employers check that the people they hire are here legally. Yet we have many millions of illegal workers, most of whom have arrived since that law was passed. Its gross ineffectiveness devalues the whole concept of playing by the rules.

To be credible, the new law must restore the value of the green card. The reform must make it harder to live in this country, receive its benefits, and get a job without a green card. That will require much tougher enforcement, both at the border and by employers. Once the country has a guest worker program that provides verifiable documentation to those who come here to work, why give driver's licenses or other benefits to individuals without documentation? Why not punish employers who hire undocumented workers? The whole idea of "comprehensive" immigration reform is to make the legal process credible again.

In theory, the "reform"-oriented Senate bill is supposed to be combined with an "enforcement"-oriented House bill in conference to produce "comprehensive" reform. But substantial parts of the "reform" coalition have no interest at all in "enforcement." This includes many of the advocacy groups who staged the recent demonstrations and some of their political supporters. It probably also includes many employer groups, who have no interest in sanctions, and have embraced the guest worker approach only as a means of dampening demands for tougher enforcement.

This has not created an environment conducive to compromise, and cynical moves to score partisan points have made matters worse. Even so, passing legislation will prove to be the easy part. Successfully implementing a new law will be much tougher.

Three things must happen for comprehensive reform to work. First, "the back of the line" for citizenship must really mean the back of the line. No newly legalized illegal should obtain citizenship before anyone who has already begun the application process. Second, substantial money, manpower, and management skills must be committed as soon as possible to implementing the new immigration procedures. The government must be candid with the public about the enormous magnitude of the effort it is about to undertake. Otherwise, the inevitable missteps will undermine citizens' and would-be immigrants' confidence in our seriousness about the rule of law. Third, the government must make enforcement credible. This may mean physical barriers to entry; it certainly requires stepped-up enforcement at workplaces and by dispensers of government services. Logic would dictate that enforcement, particularly at the border, begin even before all of the administrative apparatus is in place. At the very least, government should act to minimize the size of the problem it faces.

America seems to embark on a major immigration reform roughly every 20 years. The one in the 1960s reoriented immigration toward the Western Hemisphere, while promising to control entry. The one in the 1980s offered amnesty and a path to normalization, and again promised to restore the rule of law. Neither delivered on enforcement. As Congress contemplates its third effort, the credibility of the entire process is very much at stake. This time, one suspects the proverbial "three strikes" metaphor applies: If Washington fails to provide a comprehensive system that actually engenders respect for the rules, the rule of law will be damaged to such an extent that it may not recover. The next time the issue comes to the fore, the politics will not be pretty. ♦

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American Fortresses

It's hard to carry out our foreign policy from behind thick concrete walls

By Andrew Natsios

Last December, I dedicated the Agency for International Development's new building in the Green Zone in Baghdad. The facility houses a staff of 150, who run AID's $5.2 billion program of aid to Iraq. The building has no windows, the outside doors are as thick as the doors of a bank vault, and the walls and ceilings are constructed of several feet of reinforced concrete: a fortress virtually invulnerable to an insurgent attack. It sits in a compound surrounded by high concrete walls, barbed wire, and advanced security technology of every kind.

The kind view would be that this structure expresses America's intention to remain in the country over the long haul to help the Iraqis build a functioning democracy. Unquestionably, however, it also represents a conundrum for American diplomacy in hot spots around the world: How are the conduct of diplomacy and delivery of foreign assistance possible in the face of forbidding security measures that separate official Americans from the societies in which they serve?

The problem did not begin with Iraq or Afghanistan. For Americans at home, 9/11 was the defining event of the post-Cold War era, but for the 65,000 official Americans living abroad and working in 230 embassies and consulates and AID missions, the defining event took place three years earlier, on August 7, 1998. On that day, two al Qaeda operatives used car bombs to blow up the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, killing 220 people and injuring more than 4,000. Twelve American and 40 Kenyan and Tanzanian employees of the U.S. government were among the dead. The attacks set in motion a new approach to securing U.S. government facilities and personnel that has had profound and unintended consequences for America's ability to conduct the war against terror.

In the weeks following the embassy attacks, the Clinton administration made two decisions of historic significance for American diplomacy. First, Admiral William Crowe, retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked to lead an investigation of why the embassies had been so vulnerable. And second, it was decided to "right-size" the official U.S. presence abroad, a euphemism for reducing the American footprint in light of the increasing security risks.

Not unexpectedly, the Crowe Commission sharply criticized "the collective failure of the U.S. government over the past decade" to protect American embassies from terrorist attack. Earlier, after the 1983 bombings of the U.S. embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut, another retired admiral, Bobby Ray Inman, led a commission that established new standards for embassy construction. But little funding had been provided, and even when it was, the Inman standards had frequently been waived. That ended with the embassy bombings in Africa. After 9/11, the focus on security at embassies intensified again. The world was indeed growing more dangerous.

The 1998 bombings, the Crowe report, and the attacks on 9/11 gradually increased the authority of the State Department's regional security officers by changing the incentive structure within embassies around security issues. The State Department's Diplomatic Security Service—the second largest bureau, with 34,000 employees including foreign hires—grew as the threat increased. Concerned that they might be blamed for failing to anticipate other incidents, regional security officers became increasingly cautious about allowing official Americans to move around freely outside embassies, and they tightened procedures for outsiders seeking to enter. Ambassadors themselves grew less and less willing to overrule their security officers out of concern that if an incident occurred they would be held responsible. The divisive politics of the Beltway, where security incidents become instant fodder for editorials, con-

Andrew Natsios is professor in the practice of diplomacy at Georgetown University and former administrator of USAID (2001-06).

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gressional hearings, campaign ads, and political recriminations, accelerated this perverse dynamic.

Midlevel diplomats and aid officers who were supposed to spend their days interacting with the societies in which they served were more handicapped by the new security measures than ambassadors and AID mission directors, who usually had security details at their command. For aid officers who previously had done much of their work in the countryside, this meant fewer and fewer opportunities to build the relationships with local leaders and communities that underpin development work and ensure that U.S.-funded projects respond to local needs. It meant less chance to see firsthand what was happening in out-of-the-way regions, and to adapt programs to changing local realities.

After the 1998 bombings, the office responsible for building embassies was criticized for its failure to follow the Inman standards and its inability to finish its work quickly. When Colin Powell became secretary of state he took several steps to fix this dysfunctional office. He secured a large increase in his budget for security, and he named retired Major General Chuck Williams to run the security bureau. Under Williams's disciplined direction, design and construction were standardized, and the volume of construction was increased. During the Cold War, AID missions typically had been separate from embassies and were not secured to handle classified materials. Local people could come and go relatively easily. Now, AID, along with other agencies that had had separate buildings, was ordered to move into the newly secured embassy compounds.

However skilled the architects, the buildings they designed had to conform to the Inman standards. The new embassies are all along the lines of the AID building in Baghdad. They have massive walls and small windows with thick shatterproof glass, and are set far back from the street. New perimeter walls—solid, high, and bomb-resistant—have replaced the elegant wrought-iron fences around the old mansions that housed our diplomats when a more genteel diplomacy was practiced. The new embassies and residences, even when their design is elegant, resemble the fortresses of medieval Europe, built to protect their inhabitants from marauding warlords and bandits. They project the image not of an America that is open to the host country, but of one that is closed, suspicious, and defensive.

The Government Accountability Office and the State Department have described "right-sizing" as an effort not to reduce the U.S. presence abroad, but simply to eliminate redundancies and save taxpayer dollars. Congress has been clearer about its intent: Security comes first, and the official American presence abroad should be reduced. Even before 9/11, Secretary Powell temporarily reversed this downsizing, but much of the subsequent growth has been in diplomatic security and consular affairs, which are by their nature defensive functions: Their jobs are to defend and protect rather than engage and convince.

And then came the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Swift military victories in both countries were followed by insurgencies. In the early phase of the wars, insurgents focused on American and allied troops, but as time passed and they sustained heavy casualties in their attacks on military targets, they shifted tactics and began targeting AID and other civilians in order to cripple reconstruction. As the insurgencies grew more lethal and casualties mounted, security has become an abiding preoccupation of much of the official American civilian presence and is gobbling up an increasing portion of the reconstruction budgets.

Despite the expenditure of millions of dollars to protect them, nearly 150 AID-funded workers with NGOs and contractors or on university staffs were killed in action in Afghanistan (83) and Iraq (63) between 2002 and 2005—more casualties than in the previous 30 years combined. During the same period, only two Americans on the State Department staff and none on the AID staff were killed, a testament to the effectiveness of safeguards put in place by the Diplomatic Security Service.

The problem is the nonmonetary cost of this nearly casualty-free record. The security measures in Iraq and Afghanistan can only be described as draconian. AID and State Department officers privately admit these embassy compounds are virtual prisons. Officers are permitted off the grounds only for official meetings in preapproved locations, visitors are discouraged by rigorous screening procedures, and most public places and events are off limits. The resulting isolation has contributed more to morale problems than the insurgencies, since it leaves officers unable to develop the relationships with local people they need to effectively pursue American objectives.

The situation is most extreme in Iraq, where official Americans are permitted to travel outside their working compounds—even inside the Green Zone—only if the trips are planned three days in advance, and then only with a security detail usually composed of a large contingent of retired commandos from Western militaries hired at great cost from private security contractors. Inevitably, the number of Americans leaving the compounds has dropped. Partner organizations, both Iraqi and American-based, began asking AID staff not to visit them in their offices outside the Green Zone because the large security details were drawing the attention of the insurgents. At the same time, the number of Iraqis and partner organizations visiting USAID officers in their compound, never very high, also dropped month after month. The high walls, the barbed wire, the heavy weapons at each corner, the high casualty rates of Iraqis waiting at checkpoints to get into the Green Zone, and the onerous screening procedures

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were an obvious discouragement. Afghanistan is little better.

This has hampered the reconstruction process in both countries ever so subtly. Reconstruction and development are not principally about building physical structures, but about building institutions, reforming policies, and transferring values and technology. To do it successfully, USAID officers must interact regularly with officials in government ministries, with professors in their universities, members of professional associations, leaders of businesses and religious institutions, and with local NGOs. At its core, it is about building trust and shared commitments.

It is daily interactions with local people and the personal trust they lead to that allow aid officers to guide change and encourage reform-minded officials. These relationships are often more important than any program. In Iraq and Afghanistan, these interactions are now limited to telephone calls and emails—if that, for some believe even these contacts compromise their security given the porous nature of electronic communications. To get out from under the security restrictions in Kabul and Baghdad, the U.S. government has started placing a few officers in small provincial offices, but they represent a tiny portion of resources and are themselves hobbled by security restrictions.

As the security situation has deteriorated, the foreign media working in Iraq have faced the same security conundrum. Increasingly, they resolve it by doing their "reporting" without ever leaving their hotels. In Baghdad, they hire Iraqi reporters as stringers, who risk their lives every day to get stories too dangerous for Americans. This reporting reflects a Baghdad-centric view of what is happening in the country. Reporters who have taken the risk and traveled widely, sometimes embedded in U.S. military units, seem to present a different Iraq in their stories.

While some argue that Iraq and Afghanistan are anomalies, the pattern is being repeated less dramatically in embassies around the developing world, where the war against terror will be won or lost. The American presence abroad is being constrained just when it should be dramatically expanded. The danger is that security will become the mission, rather than a necessary means to a larger end. Many diplomats and aid officers believe this mutation has already occurred—that we have tied our own hands in the achievement of our national objectives. That we may be doing so unnecessarily is suggested by the fact that, in places like Afghanistan and Sudan, American government workers are far more isolated than their counterparts in other Western embassies and in NGOs.

Victory in the war against terror will not be achieved because we have adequately protected our embassies and our AID missions and their employees. The victory we seek requires communicating ideas, values, and world views. It requires sending "troops" of many different kinds to the front lines, not downsizing our diplomacy or our reconstruction and development aid. The war is now being fought from behind the walls of fortresses that are going up all around the world to represent America. It is not unheard of for a political campaign, or a military battle, or a diplomatic fight to be successfully fought and won from a defensive position. But it is rare indeed.

The defensive, zero-risk diplomacy symbolized by our fortress embassies and traceable back at least to 1998 is self-defeating, however necessary it may have seemed to those who promoted it. Happily, it is not going unchallenged. In fact, a vision of an entirely different diplomacy has been articulated at the highest levels of the Bush administration and is already in the early stages of implementation. It is a development that should be supported and encouraged.

In a little-noticed speech at Georgetown University on January 18, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice outlined what she called "transformational diplomacy." Its purpose, she said, is to advance the extraordinarily ambitious project set forth in the president's 2005 inaugural address, when he said: "It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

This new diplomacy—the work of a generation, Rice said—requires, among other things, redeploying many U.S. diplomats from Europe and Washington to countries like China, India, Nigeria, and Lebanon, given that the threat to the nation's vital interests has moved from the European theater to the Third World, the preferred haven for many of the extra-state forces threatening the United States. It will involve sending single officers out of embassies to small, low-key regional offices called American Presence Posts to interact regularly with civil society, something tried with considerable success in Indonesia and Egypt by Powell's State Department. A greater emphasis will be placed on regional approaches to public diplomacy, and on rapid response teams like those AID already uses for disaster relief. Our best foreign-language speakers will be "forward deployed" and encouraged to appear on live TV in their host countries. The Internet will be put to imaginative use to engage previously unreached audiences. The changes and the fresh thinking come not a moment too soon.

Still unknown is how fiercely the bureaucratic systems of the State Department will resist this shift, and whether the perverse security dynamic in our embassies can be reversed. What is certain is that a zero-risk mentality is not a war-winning mentality. Unless we allow for a tolerable level of managed risk—even risk to life and limb—neither our diplomats nor our aid missions can do the work for which they exist, at a time when their contribution is more needed than ever. ♦

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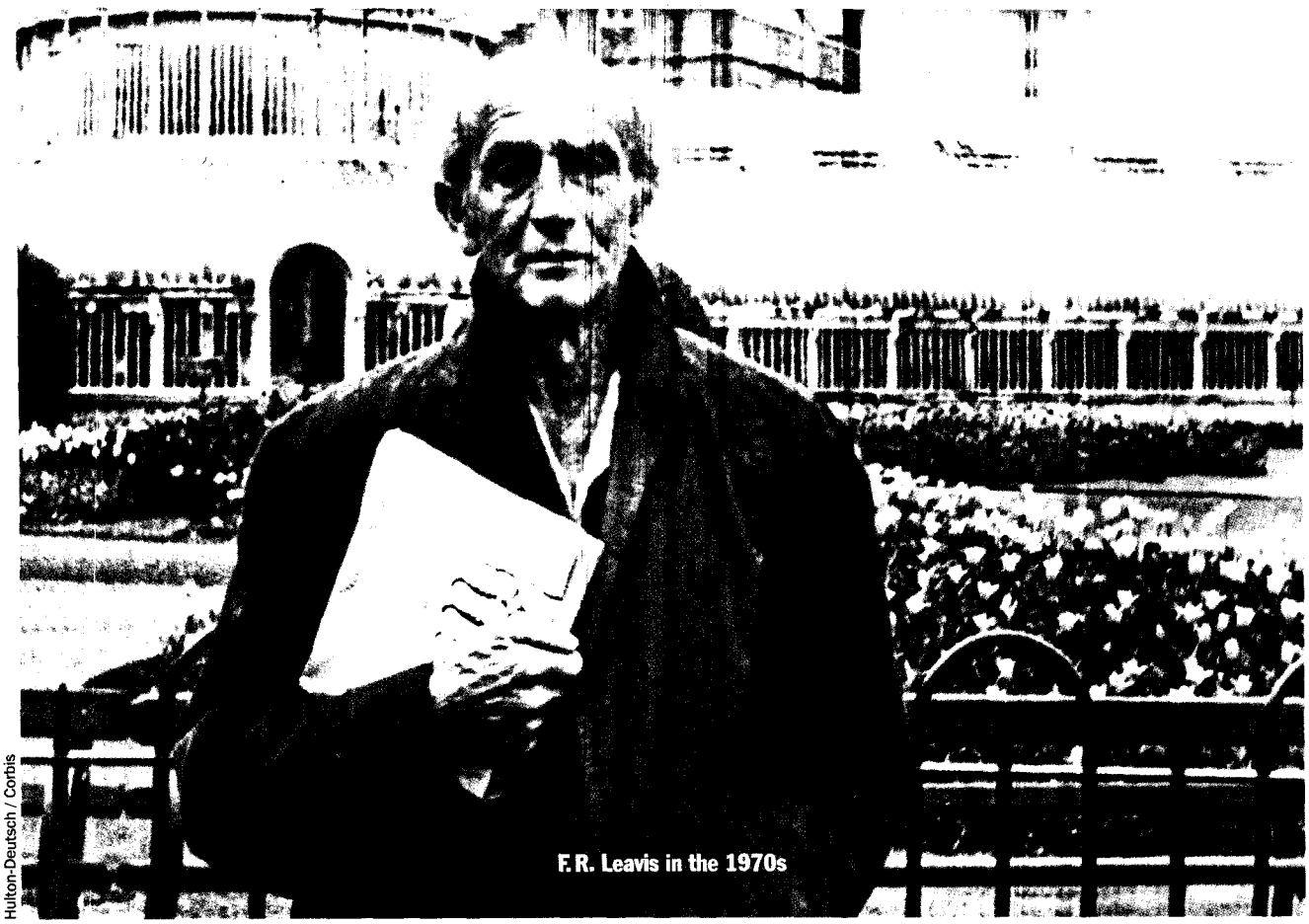

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F.R. Leavis in the 1970s

Dr. Leavis, I Presume?

The man who put 'critic' in 'criticism' By Brooke Allen

F.R. Leavis (1895-1978) might not have been the most influential literary critic of the 20th century—that title would probably go to T.S. Eliot, whose rather slight output of literary essays made a disproportionate impact on the intellectual world—but within academia his effect was incalculable. Leavis's career, which lasted from the 1930s to the '70s, coincided with the creation of "English" as a subject in British universities and the professionalization of literary studies.

Leavis and like-minded scholars of his day believed that the study of literature should aspire to standards comparable with those demanded in the study of law, for example, or science. Critics should be *qualified*, just as doctors are qualified. Many disagreed; Britain, after all, had a long and proud tradition of the literary *amateur*. Leavis, a passionate polemicist with a genius for making enemies, was the most vocal advocate for the new professionalism.

F. R. Leavis
Essays and Documents
Edited by Ian MacKillop
and Richard Storer
Continuum, 314 pp., $39.95

Leavis saw literature in moral terms and literary criticism as a moral exercise. Many of his contemporaries described him as a puritan, and this is not a bad label: He was not a theological or sexual puritan, certainly, but a puritan in the Cromwellian sense, a doughty soldier in the cause of righteousness as he defined it. Literature was his religion. Those with a similar sense of literary vocation found his ideas sympathetic, while those who did not tended to be put off. He was a polarizing figure within academia—not everyone, at that time, thought English an appropriate subject for advanced study—and in the world of London letters, a milieu he condemned as frivolous and insufficiently focused on the good and the true.

As a fellow at Downing College, Cambridge from 1936 to 1962, and a pioneer of the "Cambridge English" that would help determine the way English was taught in colleges and universities both in England and America, and as the editor of the widely-read literary magazine *Scruti-*

Brooke Allen is the author of the forthcoming Moral Minority: Our Skeptical Founding Fathers.

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ny, Leavis wielded tremendous influence. The Downing curriculum was so thorough and rigorous that schoolmasters across Great Britain obtained the college's exams and entrance papers as a sort of training manual for their sixth-formers, so that innumerable students left school with a Leavisite education whether or not they had any intention of going on to Cambridge. These same schoolmasters, on Leavis's advice, soaked up his recommended reading list: I.A. Richards's *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Practical Criticism*, William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, T.S. Eliot's *Selected Essays*, and Leavis's own work. Their students were specially directed toward Leavis's favorite authors, who included John Donne, Jane Austen, both Eliots (T.S. and George), and D.H. Lawrence.

Leavis's effect on educational standards was so pervasive that his inimical colleague, the literary historian E.M.W. Tillyard, complained that his students were trained rather than educated; they came up to Cambridge, he said, already armed with "a repertory of labels and phrases to be attached, by cunning, to the proper exhibits," and fully informed as to "the proper authors to admire or despise." Patrick Harrison, a former student of Leavis's, has spoken not only of "OK texts" for Leavis's students to read and approve, but "OK words"—"poise," "immediacy," "sharply realized"—for them to bandy about in examination papers.

Leavis's approach to literature as a moral endeavor has been inspiring to some, off-putting to others. He cared nothing for what literary critics would now call *jouissance*, the sensual enjoyment of the work of art. It is entirely characteristic for him to have seized upon *Hard Times* as his favorite Dickens novel, for this is the least "Dickensian" of the author's *oeuvre*, a bare-boned moral fable that lacks the verbal excess and lavish imagery—the *jouissance*—that was Dickens's real gift as a writer.

Leavis's seminal book *The Great Tradition* proposed a "great tradition" in the English (or rather, Anglophone) novel that ran from Jane Austen through George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad. As his choice of authors indicates, his concern was once again with a particular sort of moral fable in which "the intention is peculiarly insistent, so that the representative significance of everything in the fable . . . is immediately apparent as we read." Critics bemoaned what they saw as aesthetic purism and, indeed, even Leavis himself seemed uncomfortably aware of it, acceding, as time went on, that there was an alternate and entirely different "tradition" to be argued, a prophetic and sensual one that ran through William Blake and Dickens to Lawrence.

Leavis was widely seen as didactic and domineering, but as his biographer Ian MacKillop has said, "It should not be thought that Leavis expected literary criticism to be universally Leavisian. He truly believed he was a necessary opposition." This is absolutely true. In his view, the assumptions and habits of the 19th century had continued unchallenged until "the Eliotic revolution" and he saw himself very much as the prophet of that revolution, fighting against a lax belle-lettrist Victorianism. Late in life, he told a colleague in a moment of unguarded vainglory that one day a triangular relationship would become an accepted part of literary history: Lawrence-Eliot-Leavis, with himself seen as the mediator between two great and opposing artistic visions.

Leavis was not only dogmatic but belligerent and paranoid. He was also, however, an inspiring teacher. His detractors accused him of brainwashing his followers, but as one student remembers, "It was his energy and seriousness that were pervasive rather than his opinions. . . . To an undergraduate his absorbed continuing interest, his vivid relationship with figures of the past, his belief in the importance of what we were doing—these were the things that struck me." Another student, Neal Roberts, is even more laudatory, and his paean indicates why the intransigent Leavis became such a key figure within his historical moment—not so much the moment of the Eliotic revolution, perhaps, as that of the postwar welfare state, when the traditionally elitist universities were finally opened to men and women from the state schools.

"I would say that Leavis's importance as a cultural influence," writes Roberts, "comes less from the specific judgments of texts, or even his critical method, than from the impression he gave, to a student without a received background of literary culture, that English literature, English culture, belonged to you. That was very fortifying when you were an obscure scholar from a lower-middle class London suburb about to enter Cambridge. It meant that my ideal Cambridge was not the Cambridge of Bloomsbury, of the leisured classes and the public schools, of an elite culture in the class sense. It centered on a man whose culture-heroes were the tinker's son who wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the clerk's son who wrote *Great Expectations*, the steward's daughter who wrote *Middlemarch* and above all the miner's son who wrote *The Rainbow*. . . . "

It is to Leavis the teacher that Ian MacKillop and Richard Storer have devoted this new volume, *F.R. Leavis: Essays and Documents*. This book was originally intended to mark the great man's centenary, but Leavis was born in 1895 so it is now more than a decade too late for that. Something rather in the nature of a *Festschrift*, it brings together pieces by an array of Leavis's onetime students. There are essays and memoirs here, but there are also, rather fascinatingly, reading lists, lecture notes, exam papers, and annotations. At their best, these pieces give the reader an idea of just what it was like to study with the master, to be educated—or, if you like, trained or even indoctrinated—in the Leavisian creed.

The lecture notes, collected by Charles Winder, give one a particularly vivid sense of being in the class-

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room with the teacher. Sometimes Winder jotted down the patter verbatim, so that we even get a sense of Leavis's spoken tone. Here are a few excerpts:

> Cowley, the Aldous Huxley of the 17th century. . . . Ability but not creative. . . .
>
> The Prophetic Books [by Blake] a creative disaster; nothing in them.
>
> Except for Shakespeare the Elizabethans don't matter.
>
> Dickens potentially a greater writer than he actually became.
>
> Browning. . . . Like a modern American evangelist. Billy Graham, the preacher who will do a back-somersault in the middle of a sermon to keep the crowd on his side.
>
> After [George Eliot]'s written as far as Silas Marner she's exhausted her material of reminiscence. She has now to be the wholly inventive novelist.

As we can see, there is plenty for an alert student to think about and challenge. "Except for Shakespeare the Elizabethans don't matter"—can we let that get by? Which of them does matter? Hasn't this opinion permeated our academic agenda, and our curricula? "Dickens potentially a greater writer than he actually became"—this is true, surely, for in terms of pure talent Dickens has had no rival (in the English language) but Shakespeare—yet not many really consider him the greatest writer after Shakespeare.

The spoken voice one gleans from these notes is rather attractive. Leavis's written voice is far less so: In fact, his prose was justly called "repellent" by one *TLS* reviewer, "coke-like in its roughness and chill" by another. Here is an example:

> It is not merely that without an ability to read literature (that is, to see that Eugene O'Neill doesn't exist), and without a sense of the human tradition such as cannot be acquired apart from an education in literature, one cannot acquire the sense of 'human values' desiderated. It is that, if one cannot see that it is impossible to read Aeschylus (in English or Greek) as one reads Shakespeare, then one cannot read Shakespeare in any serious sense; and if one cannot read Shakespeare, then one cannot think. . . .

Even setting aside Leavis's dubious propositions, the prose *qua* prose is scandalous, and one is tempted to suggest that someone who seriously uses the word "desiderated" is not himself qualified to read (much less to teach) Shakespeare or Aeschylus, or even the nonexistent O'Neill.

With these citations, we are given glimpses of a paradox within Leavis's approach: The high seriousness that could be so exciting too easily shifted into the high seriousness that could be so deadening. Another essay in the collection, Barry Cullen's "The Impersonal Objective: Leavis, the Literary Subject and Cambridge Thought," explores this dichotomy further. Leavis and what Cullen calls "the Richards-Eliot axis in Cambridge" placed, Cullen says, "particular emphasis upon professionalizing English Studies as an intellectual discipline, one capable of groundbreaking innovation similar to that which their colleagues, Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein, had achieved in the Cambridge philosophy school. . . . [T]hese Cambridge critics saw their task as one of de-aestheticizing literature so that it could take its place as a key component of cultural science."

To de-aestheticize literature seems a perverse and probably fatal operation: If one were to achieve this end, what would be the result? Mere moral symbols and formulae, indistinguishable from—no, rather thinner than—abstract philosophical propositions. Leavis carried on a famous feud with the scientist and novelist C.P. Snow, in which he attacked Snow's scientific cultural bias and expressed his own distaste for what he described as a "general technocratic drift" in modern civilization. But surely Leavis's own career is symptomatic of that drift. Could the Elizabethan, the Augustan, or even the Victorian, age have produced a *litterateur* who aspired to "de-aestheticize" literature in the service of abstract standards? Would people of those eras have been naive enough to believe it possible?

The worst item in this collection is Gary Day's unbearable essay on "Leavis and Post-Structuralism," a perfect illustration of everything the nonacademic world most detests about academia. This is followed up by Michael Black's "Leavis on Lawrence," a well-written and intelligent essay, but one which swallows the Leavis party line a little too easily. "[T]hese are the key writers in the 'short 20th century': Eliot the great poet and Lawrence the great writer of fiction; and we know they are that because the great critic has shown it."

Well—*do* we? Leavis's writings on Eliot got crankier and crankier over the years, until at the end the Eliot he grappled with was unrecognizable to the reader and was probably unrecognizable to Eliot himself. His work on Lawrence, passionately intense and often beautiful, in fact, never transcended his own subjectivity. Nor perhaps would we want it to, for Lawrence himself was an artist with a glorious faith in the subjective. Another contributor to this book, Keith Dobson, illustrates the same point with a telling anecdote.

> I was listening recently to an American art critic, Mr Greenberg, saying that no critic had discovered an objective method of evaluating works of art. The interviewer said, 'What about Leavis?' Mr Greenberg said, I admire Leavis immensely; but he was just as much an aesthete as the rest of them. I'd love him to be here today [laughing], and I'd tell him so.

Leavis, in fact, had a crippling inability to reconcile the kind of contradictions that will always persist in so inexact a discipline as literature. When he began his work on Lawrence, for example, he was disturbed by the thought that, to accept Lawrence whole, one would have to surrender "all that Jane Austen stood for." Likewise, to make a case for Donne, he felt, would negate John Milton and everything *he* stood for. This either/or mentality—if one is right, the other must be wrong—should have no place in literary criti-

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cism. The only reason Lawrence might negate Austen, or Milton might negate Donne, is if the critic accepts Lawrence and Milton in the spurious role they both enjoyed playing: that of prophet. And if the critic does this, he implicitly surrenders his claim to aesthetic judgment and assumes the mantle of the philosophical acolyte, a position that has nothing whatever to do with criticism. If we look at them as imaginative artists, there is no reason Lawrence and Austen, Donne and Milton, cannot all be equally right—each, that is, within his or her own subjective world.

Though often made with unbecoming assurance, Leavis's pronouncements are still provocative, because as aesthetic statements they tend to be inherently unanswerable. When he says that "great poetry" must have "impersonality" we feel he is parroting Eliot and we doubt him, but his own ideas are consistently intriguing. For example: "[A] sensibility that is not decidedly of its time will hardly be of a kind to exert a commanding pressure—to have that peculiar individual intensity that manifests the poet." Is this true? One searches for contrary examples, and falls short. And yet, perhaps great poetry only *seems* of its time in retrospect, because we have incorporated that very same poetry into our own idea and definition of its time.

A sophisticated observer like Patrick Harrison, whose memoir "Downing After the War" is included here, is able to unite the sympathetic and unpleasant sides of Leavis with real artistry. Here is his rather cruel summation of Leavis's career:

> T.S. Eliot in the 1930s and 1940s can in some respects be seen as a part-time writer and an amateur critic. To say this is in no way to belittle his significance: it gave to his small oeuvre a refreshingly succinct impact, in contrast to the more voluminous works of many professional men-of-letters. But to embody his insights and the significance of his poetry systematically into an academic establishment responsible for the teaching of English called for an operation altogether different in kind from anything in which Eliot was interested or of which he was capable. This was the task Leavis set himself, like an energetic colonial administrator following up an inspired but unreliable conqueror. Mapping the provinces, first of poetry, then the novel. Establishing an appropriate ideology. Discrediting the lingering remnants for former rule. Setting up training establishments for district officers to maintain law, order and morale throughout as much new territory as possible and defending its borders. Ridiculing enemies. Ruthlessly executing without trial those suspected of disloyalty or heresy. Practicing an austere personal regime of life and feeling increasingly betrayed by the slipping into self-indulgence and dotage of the once admired leader in the decadence of a distant capital. How dull, serious, secular, and pedestrian all this effort must have seemed to Eliot, at ease in a fashionable world which Leavis abhorred and shunned and in which he could never have felt at home anyway. Yet, if Eliot's news bearings were to have permanent influence beyond a tiny elite and not to be swept away by subsequent tides of fashion, an effort of the kind made by Leavis had to be undertaken by someone.

All very true. And in the end, Eliot himself found the efforts of his obsessed fan not only dull, serious, secular, and pedestrian, but increasingly unhinged. "I so strongly disagreed with Dr Leavis during the last days of [*Scrutiny*]," Eliot wrote, "and objected to his attacks and innuendoes about people I knew and respected. I think it is a pity he became so intemperate in his views and was extravagant in his admirations, as I had, in the earlier stages of the magazine, felt great sympathy for its editor."

"Intemperate" and "extravagant" are, in fact, mild terms: Where *The Great Tradition* and *The Common Pursuit*, *New Bearings in English Poetry* and *Education and the University* had been provocatively polemical, much of Leavis's late writing (see, for instance, *The Living Principle: 4 'English' as a Discipline of Thought* [1975]) descended to paranoid rants aimed at largely imaginary enemies.

To reexamine Leavis's career is to return to the question he thought he had definitively answered: that is, whether it is really desirable to "professionalize" literary criticism at all. Perhaps Leavis's Victorian and neo-Victorian predecessors (George Saintsbury, Arthur Quiller-Couch, Lord David Cecil) had it right, and the study of literature must remain the province of the erudite amateur. Literature simply cannot be judged or examined by scientific standards; if it could, it would not be literature at all but science or philosophy.

Moreover, when literature is asked to fulfill the function of religion, it can't help seeming just a little bit thin. One hesitates to say that Leavis took literature *too seriously*—for, of course, it is a serious pursuit for those of us to whom it matters—but he approached it with a partisan rage that is somehow inappropriate to the art's inherent delicacy and necessary humanity. Going over his attack against C.P. Snow and the idea of the "two cultures" (scientific and humanistic) that Snow discerned within their society, one feels that Leavis, for all his fervent commitment, somehow lost the argument. When Snow proposed that the intricacy of scientific knowledge was the "most beautiful and wonderful collective work of man," Leavis countered it with what he called a prior work: "the creation of the human world, including language."

Well, the farther our scientific knowledge progresses—and it has progressed significantly since the deaths of Leavis and Snow—the less self-sufficient and beautiful our human world begins to seem in relation to the infinite mysteries of the universe. It is only too clear that there are many more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in Leavis's philosophy. In the end, Leavis fell short of his own high humanistic ideals, through intellectual exclusivity and sheer bloody-mindedness, and the passionate advocate degenerated into the hectoring bigot. ♦

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Baathed in Blood

Chronicling the horror, and scope, of Saddam's tyranny. BY GERARD ALEXANDER

In a bright room in Baghdad, Saddam Hussein is on trial. In the din of America's public square, so is the invasion that overthrew him. An international stable of writers argue that the only evidence that matters, in both trials, is of Saddam's horrifying human rights violations. Nine years after the acclaimed *Black Book of Communism* appeared, another French publisher has issued a 701-page "black book of Saddam Hussein" that pushes to the background all talk of WMDs, skewed intelligence, terrorism, and democratization, and focuses our attention on the atrocities of a tyrant of historic proportions.

Le Livre noir de Saddam Hussein
Edited by Chris Kutschera
Oh! Editions, 701 pp., 29.90 Euros

The book's editor, veteran French journalist Chris Kutschera, concludes that while "the American war may not have been the ideal way to put an end to Saddam Hussein's dictatorship," there was no better one, because overthrow was simply no longer possible from within a savagely repressed society. So: No invasion, more Saddam. And that was an outcome these authors—an array of Middle Eastern, European, and American journalists, academics, and activists—could not bear.

This hefty volume includes almost three dozen substantive chapters chronicling the rise and record of Iraq's Baath party, the operations of Saddam's secret police, his cult of personality, his sanguinary wars against Iran and Kuwait, and his international suppliers of arms and diplomatic support. They show that Saddam's quarter-century in power was a virtually uninterrupted exercise in bloodletting in nearly every direction.

Soon after becoming president, he massacred personal opponents in and outside of his ruling Baath party. For the next two decades, he would subject critics and adversaries to a steady stream of torture, assassination, and terror, including the rape rooms, prison horrors, and executions that were regularly reported by Amnesty International and others. Fellow Sunni Arabs were not exempt, but the main categories of victims were Iranians, Kuwaitis, and Iraq's Kurds and Shiites.

In 1980, Saddam launched a needless and bloody war against majority-Shiite Iran and terrorized Iraq's own Shiites to ensure their quiescence. As that war wound down, Saddam was freed to turn his attention to the Kurds whose loyalty was, indeed, questionable. In the 1988 "Anfal" campaigns, his henchmen killed 100,000 or more Kurds (including through poison gas) and forcibly resettled thousands more in desolate regions elsewhere in Iraq—events that Human Rights Watch declared "genocide."

Two years later, he invaded Kuwait and treated its civilians with notable brutality. When Operation Desert Storm shattered Saddam's army, both Kurds and southern Iraqi Shiites rose in revolt, and the regime maintained power through astonishing savagery, which filled mass graves across southern Iraq with an unknown number of Shiites—perhaps in the hundreds of thousands. The same images are evoked again and again: rapes, murder of children, forms of torture that make your eyes flinch from the page, and masses of victims buried in the night.

The book's marketing strategy prominently claims that Saddam's quarter-century claimed two million lives. That might overstate the tragedy. It's also premature; researchers simply can't settle on a persuasive number of victims until those mass graves are unearthed in the years to come. But what cannot be denied is the scope of Saddam's atrocities. Within his regime, Saddam ruled like Stalin: Everyone in the elite was a potential victim, and knew it. Outside the regime, he ruled more like Hitler: Since oil-rich Iraq didn't need Soviet-style slave labor, Saddam simply killed his adversaries.

In one of the most insightful essays, Hazem Saghieh, a prominent London-based Lebanese journalist, argues that comparisons to those totalitarian counterparts are not out of place. And in the preface, Bernard Kouchner, the human rights campaigner and founder of Doctors Without Borders, unabashedly calls Saddam "one of the worst tyrants in history."

The most unsettling chapters recount Baathist violations against Kurds and Shiites, as well as individual episodes like the 1960s persecution of Iraq's remaining Jews and the extermination of regime opponents like the Kurdish Barzani clan and the Shiite al-Hakim family. Details abound; Kutschera's chapter on the Kurds is a short book in its own right. Of course, even a book this size has omissions. Most obviously, it covers only sporadically the years from the first Gulf War to 2003, when the regime ruled by unconcealed gangsterism and reduced Iraqis to deepening penury.

But it also offers innovative contributions to the public debate. One section discusses Saddam's international supporters and suppliers, especially the Soviet Union and France. This could correct progressive commentators who seem to think that Saddam's closest ally was Donald Rumsfeld. A chapter describes how Arab regimes and intellectuals turned blind eyes and issued apologies. Others suggest how Saddam's policies sharpened the confessional and ethnic differences now so viciously on display in Iraqi politics.

Gerard Alexander is associate professor of politics at the University of Virginia.

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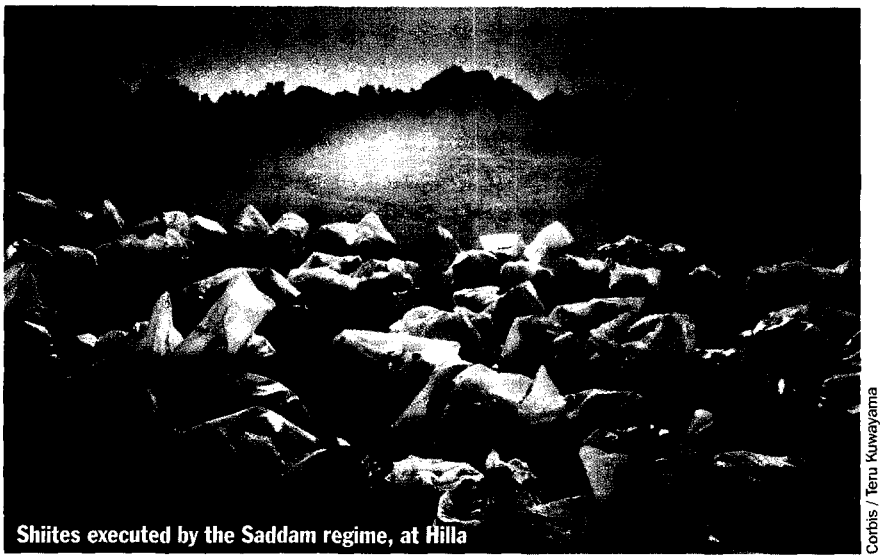
For all that, *Le Livre noir de Saddam Hussein* represents an intellectual mystery. Journalists and authors have already extensively covered Saddam and his regime. It's true that this book provides some of the best discussions available on the persecution of the Marsh Arabs and the suppression of the 1991 Shiite uprising. But in the main, all these stories are familiar. And many of them are going to be dredged up in that Baghdad courtroom anyway. This borders on old news. It seems unnecessary to produce a *Black Book* about Saddam at all. Yet most of these writers have an urgent and indignant tone.

What gives? Kutschera, the editor, offers one answer: Many people, in fact, do *not* know the scope of Saddam's crimes, and many others don't know many details about them. Perhaps more important, Kutschera and his collaborators know that they live in a world in which some items are pushed out of people's moral imaginations, and off their moral agendas, with remarkable ease and speed. Specifically, they know they live in a world in which once the Holocaust has been addressed, moral blind spots about mass murder and abuse proliferate impressively.

The pattern is plain: Over and over again, perceived abuses by Western societies—colonialism, the Vietnam war—are revisited in conversation and thought until they are part of our mental furniture. What happens to the crimes of others is very different. Some of them get sucked down the memory hole. Those of us of a certain age remember that the very independent Idi Amin was far worse, but it is Joseph Mobutu—portrayed as a U.S. ally, if not puppet—who has emerged as the durable symbol of abusive African rule.

More often, crimes committed by non-Westerners are blamed on Westerners. As in: America provided Saddam with chemical weapons; Palestinians mimic Israeli brutality; the Khmer Rouge was driven to madness by U.S. bombing. It was Belgian colonialism that taught Rwandan Hutu *génocidaires* to be tribal and to kill. And the CIA created Osama bin Laden, while U.S. excesses created his followers.


Shiites executed by the Saddam regime, at Hilla

Corbis / Teru Kuwayama

The soft bigotry here is not of low expectations but of no expectations. This suggests that only Westerners have moral agency. To deny a person the capacity to initiate evil is to deny them the capacity to initiate good, or anything in between.

The result is a vicious cycle in which many educated people engage easily with the storylines they already know, and are unsure what to do with the unfamiliar. Most infamously, members of the world's intellectual and journalistic classes have a habit of not denying Communist atrocities but of knowing almost no details about them and never volunteering the topic.

Let's not even bother with the Great Terror and the Ukrainian famine and, instead, go straight to something recent. Ask yourself: When was the last time you saw, read, or heard anyone discussing the estimated *one million* civilians killed during the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan during 1979-89? People old enough to have lived through that aren't reminded of it. And younger ones have almost no opportunity to learn about it. Such acts of forgetting are why the *Black Book of Communism* was still needed so many years after Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and why the tales it told were greeted as foreign all over again.

Iraq is not an exception. Intellectual imaginations immediately grasp the importance of the widely covered website "Iraq Body Count," tabulating Iraqi civilians reported killed *after* the 2003 overthrow of Saddam. But the researcher-activists who created that site don't run a similar count of Iraqis killed by Saddam *before* April 2003, or one of bodies as they emerge from his mass graves, and they can't even be bothered to link to neglected websites publicizing those graves, such as *afhr.org* and the austerely powerful (and graphic) *mass-graves.info*.

In the same spirit, institutions as diverse as Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the University of California at Santa Cruz, Bryn Mawr and Amherst colleges, and Florida State University have already offered courses that discuss Abu Ghraib as a place where U.S. soldiers committed abuses, not as a place in which Saddam's secret police tortured thousands to death.

It's no coincidence that the *Black Book of Saddam Hussein* has been received with what Kutschera describes as a "chill" by the French commentariat, has been ignored by the reviewers in the leading French newspapers—*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *Libération*—and was reviewed only snidely by *Le Monde Diplomatique*.

This is the real virtue of the *Black Book* and other volumes like it. They offer the details that most news media and college classes won't. They memorialize those who otherwise might be forgotten. And they are the raw materials for an alternative storyline, one that takes all peoples seriously enough to say that they are moral agents, both for evil and for good. ♦

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New York's River

From Manhattan to Mount Marcy, the spine of the Empire State. **BY PETER HANNAFORD**

It is far down the list of the nation's longest rivers, but the Hudson tops the entire list for the length and scope of its involvement in the nation's history. It is young as rivers go, a child of the last ice age when the climactic glacier, the Wisconsin Sheet, scoured the Hudson's course about 20,000 years ago. The Hudson begins near the highest point of the Adirondack Mountains, Mount Marcy, at a pond called Tear of the Clouds Lake, and ends where it joins the sea at the Verrazano Narrows, between Brooklyn and Staten Island. It is the 306 miles in between where much of the nation's growth got its start. And Tom Lewis has given us an absorbing biography of what is probably the only river to spawn an entire school of painting. The 19th-century historian Benson Lossing, in an 1866 book about the Hudson, asserted that "it is by far the most interesting river in America." With this book, Professor Lewis underscores the point.

The Hudson
A History
by Tom Lewis
Yale, 352 pp., $30

He tells us of 18th- and 19th-century proto-scientists who, fascinated by the river's beauty, explored and studied and recorded its geology, flora and fauna. It was an earlier event, however, that was to put the river on the world stage: Henry Hudson's voyage into New York harbor on September 2, 1609. Like Columbus and others, Hudson, a Londoner, was searching for a shortcut to China and India, a northern passage. He had explored the shores of Greenland on two earlier voyages. In 1609, he took up the challenge of a prize offered by the Dutch East India Company to find a northern route to the lands of the east. Portuguese, Italian, and French sailors may have gotten to the river first, but Hudson was the first to record it. Probably thinking he was at the beginning of the northern passage, Hudson sailed north until he encountered the shoals above Albany. Hudson's written account and others that followed described shores of fertile fields and forests.

His voyage occurred at a time when there was a large European market for beaver pelts, fur coats, hats, and felt. The French controlled the beaver-trapping trade in Canada. Dutch merchants saw an opportunity for taking over the lands south of it by using Hudson's charts to settle the land he had found. During 1612-18 rival Dutch trading syndicates vied for dominance along the river. In 1621, the Dutch West India Company was chartered to take over the fur trade and settled a small colony at Fort Amsterdam on the tip of Manhattan Island. Peter Minuit, who traded $24 worth of trinkets for Manhattan in 1624, was the first (and usually considered the best) of the colony's directors-general. Most were feckless or corrupt, or both. Four years later, the company granted a vast stretch of land upriver to a *patroon* named Kiliaen van Rensselaer. (Rensselaerwyck remained in the family more or less intact until the mid-19th century, when its tenant farmers rebelled and brought enough pressure to be given title to their farms.) The first Rensselaer, who never set foot in the New World, contracted with colonists to settle the land. Some brought slaves with them, the first from Curaçao and, later, arrivals from West Africa.

Lewis gives us a gripping narrative of the history of Nieuw Amsterdam, as New York City was first called, and the difficult life of planter-settlers upriver. As farms were established, there followed several years of clashes with native tribes, which finally ended in a peace agreement in 1645. In 1647, Peter Stuyvesant arrived to take over as director-general. Even then, the 500-person colony on Manhattan was cosmopolitan. In addition to the Dutch, there were English, French, German, Swedish, and Polish speakers. And during Stuyvesant's tenure he settled boundary disputes with the English (who claimed everything from Jamestown, Virginia, north) and took over, in a bloodless military expedition, the New Sweden colony that is now Delaware and part of southern New Jersey.

By the time Stuyvesant's 17-year reign ended, the entire New Netherland colony had approximately 9,000 people. He had also driven the last of the native tribes from the Hudson Valley. It was all Dutch land—but only for a short time. In 1664 a British colonel named Richard Nicolls brought 400 soldiers on four ships into New York harbor. They outnumbered the Dutch troops three-to-one, and the defenders had little ammunition. Stuyvesant agreed to turn over the colony to the British. Thus, New Netherland and New Amsterdam became New York, and the river got its present name, the Hudson.

Over the next century, the Hudson Valley's agricultural production increased steadily. New York City was woven into the trade patterns of the British Empire and the colony was aligned with Britain's anti-French foreign policy. The crown continued to grant large land patents on the river's banks to major families, such as the Livingstons, Phillipses, and van Rens-

Peter Hannaford is the editor of My Heart Goes Home: A Hudson Valley Memoir.

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Brooklyn Museum of Art / Corbis

'The Pic-Nic' (1846) by Thomas Cole

selaers. Ambitious Robert Livingston married the widow of the Rensselaer patroon (she herself was a member of the prominent Schuyler family) and their descendants figured in the history of the Hudson River for the next two centuries. In recounting the role of the river in the American Revolution, Lewis covers well-known events, but relates them in a way that gives the reader the feeling of being on the banks of the Hudson, watching them unfold. George Washington's leadership of the Continental Army, the British defeat at Saratoga, Benedict Arnold's treachery—these and more are included.

It was in the 19th century that the Hudson was the site of a virtual explosion of American technology. Robert Fulton's ingenuity and Robert Livingston's money built the first steamboat. Small sloops—for years, the river's primary carriers of people and goods—fought the intrusion, but steamboats won out and Fulton and Livingston soon had a monopoly on river transportation. In time this was broken by, among others, Cornelius Vanderbilt, who ran rival steamboat lines up and down the river and later made a great fortune in railroads. One day in 1825, Governor DeWitt Clinton and a group of dignitaries left Buffalo aboard the *Seneca Chief* to transit the new Erie Canal to the Hudson and New York City. The Erie opened a flood of agricultural commerce from the Great Lakes and manufactured goods from the Atlantic seaboard.

The Delaware-Hudson Canal soon followed, bringing Pennsylvania coal to New York. And after that came the railroads. The Hudson had become the "highway of commerce" for much of America.

As factories replaced farms along the river's shores, they brought with them pollution. Industry used the river as a "sewer" (Lewis's word), and at a time when natural resources seemed to be inexhaustible, and little was known of the side effects of industrial waste, such ignorance resulted in pollution, loss of fish, deforestation, and impure air. The 20th century brought multiple bridges across the river, along with highways and parkways, cutting into the forests and farmlands.

Tom Lewis writes nostalgically of the Eden-like scenes that captivated Thomas Cole and other painters of the Hudson River School. But he recognizes the realities of today, and rests his case on several instances of latter-day industrial clean-up, land conservation, and historic preservation. "The river's future is its past," he writes. Let us hope he is right. ♦

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Varnishing Days

England's 19th-century artist-revolutionary.

BY HENRIK BERING

The sensation at the 1824 exhibition of the Royal Academy was J.M.W. Turner's *Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus* from his fast-escaping galley, while the blinded giant is roaring in agony on top of his rock island. The painting is a golden vision, a tour de force of light effects with just a touch of operatic vulgarity in all its splendor. "No other living artist comes close to the magical powers that Mr. Turner reveals with such ease," wrote the *Times* enthusiastically. It is told that, during the Academy's formal dinner, Turner was sitting next to an art-loving bishop, who started rhapsodizing on Homer's felicities, going on and on. Upon which Turner, with a sly smile, interrupted the learned man and told him that his painting was not based on Homer at all, but on the popular music hall lines: "I sing of the cave of Polypheme / Ulysses made him cry out / For he ate his lamb, drank his wine / *And then he poked his eye out*!"

Which, come to think about it, was very rude of Ulysses.

The greatest 19th-century British painter, Turner is a biographer's dream and an obvious choice in Peter Ackroyd's admirable Brief Lives series. Turner was an arch romantic with the required penchant for the sublime in nature, for catastrophe, for man's fight against the elements. His paintings could be pessimistic and deeply misanthropic, with the shipwreck as a favorite symbol. Or they could be light pastoral idylls, like those of Claude Lorrain, his own favorite painter. About one of Turner's Venice paintings the novelist Edmond de Goncourt later wrote, "To me it seems like a painting by a Rembrandt who was born in India." He freely mixed genres, history painting with landscape painting, and ranged from classically inspired landscapes to paintings of the Industrial Revolution to apocalyptic dreamscapes, which explains why, at various times, he has been called the first impressionist, the first symbolist, and the first abstract painter.

J.M.W. Turner
by Peter Ackroyd
Doubleday, 192 pp., $21.95

Turner was also a cockney character. Short and compact, with a beaked nose, bright eyes, bandy legs, and huge feet, he looked like a pilot or coachman. Having started out as a watercolorist and painter of theatrical scenery, he emerges here as both a groundbreaking artist, who does new and unknown things, and a shrewd businessman who knows what his costumers want—and delivers. One of his specialties was topographical paintings of country houses, which allowed him to travel all over England and made him a wealthy man.

He was extremely secretive. He never married, but had a penchant for widows, first a Mrs. Danby and then Sofia Caroline Booth, a landlady in Margate, with whom he lived for the last five years of his life in a Chelsea cottage, where he pretended to be a pensioned naval officer and was known locally as Admiral Booth. His tightfistedness has been often remarked on. According to Mrs. Booth, "With the exception of the first year, he never contributed one shilling" to the household.

Like most artists, Ackroyd notes, Turner was no intellectual, but he was very well read in the self-educated fashion. His long titles—one of them contains 51 words of contorted, self-made poetry—were one of his ways of lending literary weight to landscape painting, then considered a lesser genre. As a professor of perspective, he was hard to follow, muttering away, not altogether coherently, in his cockney accent. But his accompanying illustrations made up for such deficiencies. As the Academy librarian noted, though he couldn't hear him, "there is much to *see* at Turner's lectures."

His behavior on the Academy's varnishing days is legendary. "Varnishing Days" lasted five days and were instituted to allow the artists to make final adjustments to their paintings. For Turner, they became show-off occasions where he challenged both the dead masters and his contemporary colleagues.

If Turner felt threatened by another painting, he would ratchet up the odds, as in a celebrated instance in 1832 where John Constable was putting the finishing touches on his *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge*, which was hanging next to a Turner marine. Turner entered, took one look at Constable's work, got his palette, "and putting a round daub of red lead, somewhat bigger than a shilling, on his grey sea, went away without saying a word." The red spot sucked up all the attention in the room. "He has been here, and fired a gun," Constable commented. The next day Turner came back and transformed his red spot into a water buoy.

Not only did he challenge his colleagues—in his attempt to capture what Ackroyd calls "the vaporous sublime"—but Turner was also willing to challenge the elements, whether this meant traveling for days on horseback in Yorkshire in wild weather, hanging out the window of a speeding train, or being tossed in rough seas. His famous claim that he had ordered the sailors to lash him to the mast of a steamboat off Harwich, where he stayed for four hours in a howling storm, is probably invented. But his feel for weather was extraordinary. He would recall a storm he had seen two years previously in Yorkshire, transfer it to the Alps, and

Henrik Bering is a journalist and critic.

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Art Resource NY / Erich Lessing

'Rain, Steam and Speed' (1844) by J.M.W. Turner

have Hannibal get caught up in it, as seen in *Hannibal Crossing the Alps.*

Turner loved his paintings, and refused to sell many of them; but he treated them abominably. They were kept in his gallery in Queen Anne Street, which in the beginning was very elegant, but which he let decay by being stingy with heat. There were holes in the ceiling and mildew on the walls. Six tailless cats from the Isle of Man didn't help, either. (He had a spyhole in the wall, so he could make sure that people did not make notes when visiting.) The situation was not improved by Turner's habit of not allowing his oil paintings to dry, painting over wet pigment, and by his use of different types of color (or alien substances like spit and snuff) with the result that his painting would start to crack and flake off. In one instance, a customer complained that part of the sky in his new oil painting had been painted with watercolor and was coming off in his handkerchief. In another case, Turner had cut out a paper sketch of a figure from his exercise book and just pasted it on. When told that the thing was starting to peel off, his only comment was "I forgot this entirely, and do not think I should have remembered, but for you." Not surprisingly, Turner is considered a conservationist's nightmare.

As for the critical reaction, Turner was hailed as Britain's leading landscape painter, but when he became more experimental, the critics were quick to pounce. William Hazlitt called his paintings "tinted steam" and "pictures of nothing, and very like." And that was about the early paintings, before Turner really got going. Others condemned his use of yellow: He was compared to a cook who adds curry to everything, and to a hepatitis sufferer. His portrait of Jessica from *The Merchant of Venice* "looks like a lady getting out of a large mustard pot," according to one critic, and was hence known simply as *The Mustard Pot.* His great advocate was the young John Ruskin who, in *Modern Painters*, hailed him as "a prophet of God sent to reveal to man the mysteries of His universe." Ruskin singled out *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and the Dying—Typhoon Coming On* as the one picture on which Turner's immortality would rest. Ruskin's father bought the painting for his son, as a reward for writing *Modern Painters*, and Ruskin hung it in his dining room. The painting had to be sold, however, because of the grimness of the topic.

Turner's own favorite among his works was *Dido Building Carthage*, one of his golden visions. When a customer, not understanding why Turner wouldn't sell the painting despite being offered a fortune, asked him what he wanted to do with it, Turner replied, "Be buried in it, to be sure." The Dean of St. Paul's took this seriously enough to comment, at Turner's death, that he "would not read the service over him, if he is wrapped in that picture." It was found among his paintings in Queen Anne Street, covered in mildew and rot. ♦

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Cruise Blues

Does M:I:III signal the end of the franchise?

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

There's a moment late in *Mission: Impossible III* in which Tom Cruise runs like hell down a crowded riverside street in Shanghai. Ethan Hunt, the secret agent played by Cruise, has located his missing wife and is trying to get to her before the villains decide to take her life. And Cruise isn't just running. He's sheer desperation in motion. It's an exciting bit of footage because the location is so beautiful and unusual, wonderfully well-used by director J.J. Abrams.

Mission: Impossible III
Directed by J.J. Abrams

Why, then, as the camera tracks Cruise—and it is the real Cruise who is hurtling along, not a stunt double, down an actual Shanghai street—does he begins to look less like an actual person and more like a figure in an X-Box video game? Why does this accomplished performer, who has held the attention of America and the world for almost a quarter century, now seem more a simulacrum than an actual human being?

Mission: Impossible III tries to bring the continuing story of Ethan Hunt and his Impossible Missions Force down to human scale, a filmmaking choice that marks a welcome change from its predecessors. The earlier *Mission: Impossible*s are best remembered for scenes featuring some obscure performer or other reaching down under his chin and giving it a good yank to reveal that, in fact, the obscure performer is really Cruise or one of his costars wearing a mask. I have no memory of the plotline of either of the earlier *Mission: Impossible*s. All I remember is the mask-yanking.

The mask bit reappears in *Mission: Impossible III* in an unfortunate way, when Cruise dons a Philip Seymour Hoffman mask and then starts climbing up through the catacombs under the Vatican (don't ask). The problem is that the person climbing is clearly not Cruise, but the Oscar-winning Hoffman himself, because Hoffman has about six inches and 30 lbs. on Cruise. Aside from that boo-boo, Abrams and co-writers Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci do a decent job of trying to add twists and layers to this cartoonish action-adventure franchise. (Yes, the machine that explains the assignments still self-destructs after five seconds, just as it did in the original television series 40 years ago.)

The effort to humanize *Mission: Impossible III* centers primarily on Cruise's character, and Cruise acts his heart out. He cries on cue, he is wounded, he mourns, he rages. He is *in extremis* in one way or another for most of the film's two-hour running time. Unlike most movie stars, Cruise doesn't underplay. He's always brought uncommon intensity to his work, whether he's playing a bartender with dreams of glory in the unimaginably bad *Cocktail* or a sexual self-help guru in the interminable *Magnolia*. He's the Pete Rose of actors. For the past 23 years, every time he's up, he gives it his all.

But something has gone very wrong with Tom Cruise, and it's not just because the box-office numbers are disappointing that *Mission: Impossible III* is such a calamity for him. All that intensity is in the service of nothing. He has flattened out, gone two-dimensional. Cruise has become profoundly uninteresting, and that is the worst possible thing for a movie star to be.

There have been news stories a-plenty about how the movie's disappointing box office is due to Cruise's very weird behavior over the past year —attacking women with post-partum depression for taking medication, jumping around like a chimpanzee on Oprah Winfrey's couch to profess his love for girlfriend Katie Holmes, buying his own sonogram machine so he and Katie could watch their unborn child grow, saying he might eat some of the placenta, and using his fame to begin preaching the tenets of his cult faith, Scientology. The general presumption is that Cruise's conduct has been offensive to the public and has turned audiences, mainly female audiences, against him.

That may be true, but it can't explain Cruise's dispiriting flatness in *Mission: Impossible III*.

It's not an accident that as Cruise has chosen to emerge from two decades of carefully handled personal obscurity to reveal himself as a full-bore eccentric in real life, he has lost the capacity to dazzle on-screen. All great movie stars have one thing in common: There's something mysterious about them, which is one of the reasons they are often most eloquent when they are silent. They keep something in reserve, which is one of the reasons we find it tolerable to watch them. After all, they come at us as these colossal, larger-than-life images on a screen that projects them at five to ten times normal size. If they were as raw and emotionally exposed as, say, a great stage actor, it might be intolerable to watch them.

What Cruise destroyed through his real-life antics was the distance that stars must maintain from their audiences if they are to remain objects of fascination. There's no point in speculating about Tom Cruise any longer. A person who announces he would like to eat some of his baby's placenta is probably someone you would rather not spend a lot of time thinking about or talking about. And if you don't want to think about a movie star, you don't want to watch him, either. You prefer him in two dimensions rather than three. ♦

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic and the author of* Can She Be Stopped?

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Parody

"Can one be a follower of Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) . . . but at the same time, have countries attacked; the lives, reputations and possessions of people destroyed . . . the entire village, city, or convoy set ablaze."

—from Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's 18-page letter to George W. Bush

The speaker of Iran's parliament "expressed hope the letter would set the trend for dialogue of the kind the world needs."

—Tehran Times, May 11, 2006

Dear President George Spawn-of-the-Devil Bush,

I was recently talking at length with my staff members about my theories of the universe, and they suggested I go to a quiet room alone and write them all down. So here I am. But I no longer recall any of them, so instead I thought I would take advantage of the warm green celestial aura currently enveloping me and begin a dialogue with you.

How does it feel to be a lying, thieving son of a Zionist whore? I ask this with all due respect and humility because, Your Excellency, you claim to believe in the teachings of Jesus (pbuh). I wonder if Jesus (pbuh) would support slaughtering human civilization and annihilating planet earth. I must tell you people in my region are increasingly angry over such policies.

I had a few thoughts on Israel. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that some Jews were harmed in the making of World War II. Does that justify a Jewish conspiracy to implant electronic chips in Palestinian babies and use radio waves to create an army to enslave the planet? But our guard is up, and I remind you: He only brings peril on himself who forgets the invulnerability of a head properly wrapped in aluminum foil.

You might know that I am a teacher. As my students often ask me, "What are you saying? Can you repeat that? That makes no sense." I tell them to study history. Can it be forgotten how, in 1917, the neoconservatives in Washington foresaw 9/11 but kept silent in order to dissolve the Ottoman empire in order to enrich white colonists in Africa? Perhaps it's time you reread Howard Zinn.

My country is advancing rapidly in its technology, your Excellency. Surely, this is natural. Why is it that even the most minor breakthrough in explosives is considered a threat to the Zionist pig-dogs? If you impugn us in this, then, surely, you also impugn us for running water, automobiles, and sunlight. It is as if you accuse me of producing methamphetamine simply because I emerge from a pharmacy with 800 boxes of Sudafed, when in fact my true battle is with the scourge of histamines.

Now for the good news about your spiritual degradation: A simple embrace of religious primitivism is all you need to right your course. It has done wonders for my country, and I'm grateful that the Almighty God has acted as my navigator as I have driven the automobile of state into unexpected and exciting barriers. And, God be praised, He is about to upgrade me to Turbo.

I am, in the spirit of dialogue, your most bitter enemy,

Mahmoud

the weekly Standard

May 22, 2006

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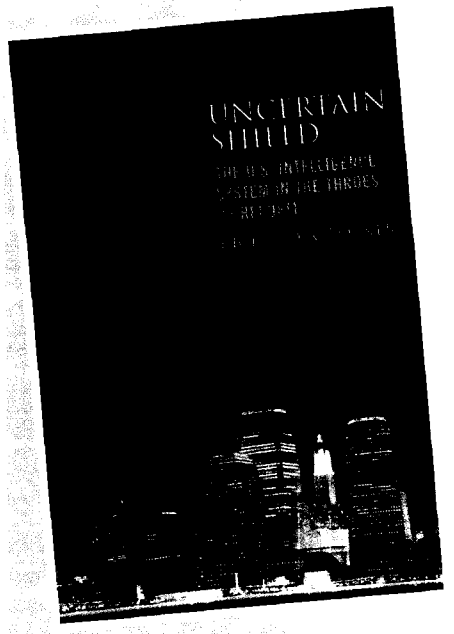

"Posner's continued study of reforms in our Intelligence structure since 9/11 is illuminating and constructive. Uncertain Shield *makes a major contribution to the debate over how best to ensure America's security."—**Henry A. Kissinger***

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- Exposes the inadequacy of the national security computer networks
- Examines critically Congress's performance in the intelligence field and raises constitutional issues concerning the respective powers of Congress and the president
- Emphasizes the importance of reforms that do not require questionable organizational changes

***Richard A. Posner** is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School. He is the author of* Remaking Domestic Intelligence.

Copublished with Rowman & Littlefield
2006, 256 pages, $19.95 Cloth
ISBN: 0-7425-5127-X

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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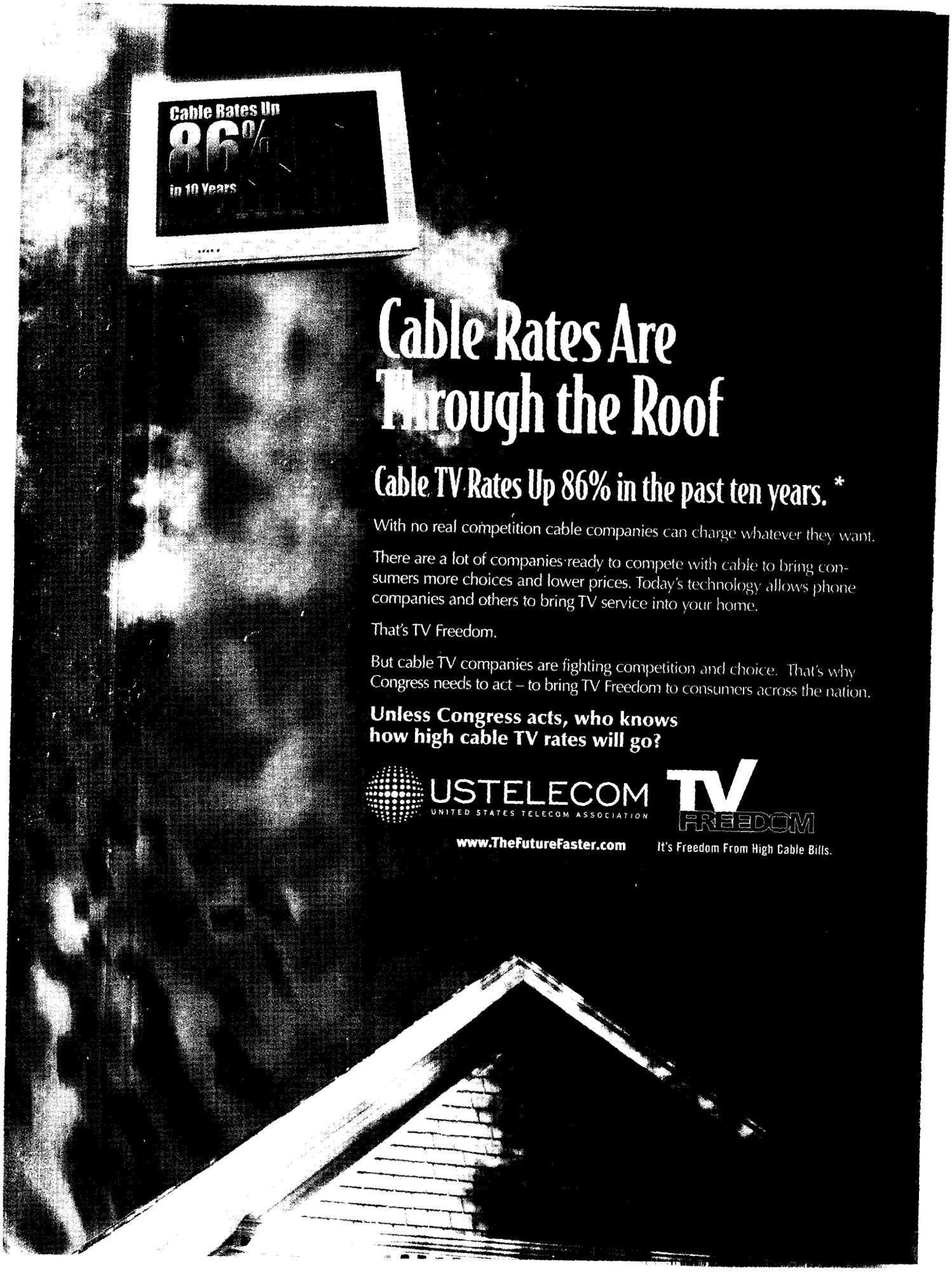

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